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*THE INTRUSIONS OF PEGGY.*¹

BY ANTHONY HOPE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN AUNT—AND A FRIEND.

¹ Barslett: July 11.

'MY DEAR SARAH,—How I wish you were here! You would enjoy yourself, and I should like to see you doing it—indeed I should be amused. I never dare tell you face to face that you amuse me—you'd swell visibly, like the person in *Pickwick*—but I can write it quite safely. We are a family party—or at any rate we look forward to being one some day, and even now escape none of the characteristics of such gatherings. We all think that the Proper Thing will happen some day, and we tell one another so. Not for a long while, of course! First—and officially—because Mortimer feels things so deeply (this is a reference to the Improper Thing which so nearly happened—are you wincing, Sarah?); secondly—and entirely unofficially—because of a bad chaperon and a heavy pupil. You are a genius; you ought to have had seventeen daughters, all twins and all out together, and five eldest sons all immensely eligible! Nature is so limited. But me! I'm always there when I'm not wanted, and I do hate leaving a comfortable chair. But I try. Do I give you any clear idea when I say that a certain young person wants a deal of hoisting—and is very ponderous to hoist? And I'm not her mother, or I really wouldn't complain. But sometimes I could shake her, as they say. No, I couldn't shake her, but I should like

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to get some hydraulic machinery that could. However—it moves all the same! What's-his-name detected that in the world, which is certainly slow enough, and we all detect it in this interesting case—or say we do. And I've great faith in repeating things. It spreads confidence, whence comes, dear Sarah, action.

Mortimer is here a lot, but is somewhat fretful. The Trans-Euphratic, it seems, is fractious, or teething, or something, and Beaufort Chance has been nasty in the House—notably nasty and rather able. (Do you trace any private history?) However I daresay you hear enough about the Trans-Euphratic at home. It buzzes about here, mingling soothingly with the approaching flower show and a calamity that has happened to a pedigree cow. Never mind details of any of them! Sir Stapleton was indiscreet to me, but it stops there, if you please. How sweet the country is in a real English home!

But sometimes we talk of the Past—and the P is large. There is a thank-heavenly atmosphere of pronounced density about Lady B.—quite sincere, I believe; she has realised that flightiness almost effected an entry into the family! Mortimer says little—deep feelings again. In my opinion it has done him some little good—which we and Audrey hope speedily to destroy. (Oh, that child! The perfection of English girlhood, Sarah; no less, believe me!) My lord is more communicative—to me. I believe he likes to talk about it. In fact Trix made some impression there; possibly there is a regret hidden somewhere in his circumference. He took me round the place yesterday, and showed me the scene of the fight. I should think going to Waterloo must give one something of the same feeling—if one could be conducted by a wounded hero of the fight. This was the conversation that passed—or something like it:—

Lord B. : She looked almost like a ghost.

Myself : Heavens, Lord B.!

Lord B. (*inserting spud in ground*) : This was the very spot—the SPOT!

Myself : You surprise me!

Lord B. : I felt certain that something unusual was occurring.

Myself : Did that strike you at once?

Lord B. : Almost, Viola—I say, almost—at once. She came up. I remonstrated. My words do not remain in my memory.

Myself : Moments of excitement——

Lord B. : But I remonstrated, Viola.

Myself: And she pushed you away?

Lord B.: She did—and ran along the path here—following this path to that gate——

Myself (*incredulously, however one's supposed to show that*): That very gate, Lord B.?

Lord B.: It's been painted since, but that is the gate, Viola.

Myself: Fancy! (There isn't any other gate, you know, so unless Trix had taken the fence in a flying leap, one doesn't see what she could have done.)

Lord B.: Yes, that gate. She ran through it and along that road——

Myself (*distrustfully*): That road, Lord B.?

Lord B. (*firmly*): That road, Viola. She twisted her veil about her face, caught up her skirts——

Myself: !!!!!

Lord B.: And ran away (*impressively*) towards the station, Viola!

Myself: Did you watch her?

Lord B.: Till she was out of sight—of sight, Viola!

Myself: I never realised it so clearly before, Lord B.

Lord B.: It is an experience I shall never forget.

Myself: I should think not, Lord B.

Then the excellent old dear said that he trusted he had no unchristian feelings towards Trix; he had been inclined to like her, and so on. But he failed to perceive how they could have treated her differently in any single particular. "You could not depend on her word, Viola." I remembered, Sarah, that in early youth, and under circumstances needless to specify exactly, you could not depend on mine—unless the evidence against me was hopelessly clear. I suppose that was Trix's mistake. She fibbed when she was bound to be found out, and saw it herself a minute later. Have you any personal objection to my dropping a tear?

I don't pretend to say I should go on writing if there was anything else to do, but it will open your mind to give you one more scrap.

Myself: What, Audrey dear, come in already? (*It is 9.30 p.m.—evening fine—moon full.*)

Audrey: Yes, it was rather chilly, Auntie, and there's a heavy dew.

Myself (*sweetly*): I thought it such a charming evening for a stroll.

Audrey : I was afraid of my new frock, Auntie.

Myself (very sweetly) : You're so thoughtful, dear. Has Mortimer come in too?

Audrey : I knew he was busy, so I told him he mustn't leave his work for me. He went in directly then, Auntie.

Myself (most sweetly) : *How* thoughtful of you, darling!

Audrey : He did suggest I should stay a little while, but the dew——

Myself (breaking down) : Good gracious, Audrey, what in the world &c., &c., &c.

Audrey (pathetically) : I'm so sorry, Auntie dear!

Now what would you do in such a case, Herr Professor Sarah?

No doubt things will turn out for the best in the end, and I suppose I shall be grateful to poor Trix. But for the moment I wish to goodness she'd never run away! Anyhow she has achieved immortality. Barmouths of future ages will hush their sons and daughters into good marriages by threatening them with Trix Trevalla. She stands for ever the Monument of Lawlessness—with locks bedraggled, and skirts high above the ankle! She has made this aristocratic family safe for a hundred years. She has not lived in vain. And tell me any news of her. Have you had the Frickers to dinner since my eye was off you? There, I must have my little joke. Forgive me, Sarah!

Affectionately,

V. B.'

'Tut!' said Mrs. Bonfill, laying down the letter, extracts from which she had been reading to her friend Lord Glentorly.

'She's about right as to Chance, anyhow,' he remarked. 'I was in the House, and you couldn't mistake his venom.'

'He doesn't count any longer.' Mrs. Bonfill pronounced the sentence ruthlessly.

'No, not politically. And in every other way he's no more than a tool of Fricker's. Fricker must have him in the hollow of his hand. He knows how he stands; that's the meaning of his bitterness. But he can make poor Mortimer feel, all the same. Still, as you say, there's an end of him!'

'And of her too! She was an extraordinary young woman, George.'

'Uncommonly attractive—no ballast,' summed up Glentorly. 'You never see her now, I suppose?'

'Nobody does,' said Mrs. Bonfill, using 'nobody' in its accepted

sense. She sighed gently. 'You can't help people who won't be helped.'

'So Viola Blixworth implies,' he reminded her with a laugh.

'Oh, Viola's hopelessly flippant; but she'll manage it in the end, I expect.' She sighed again and went on, 'I don't know that, after all, one does much good by meddling with other people's affairs.'

'Come, come, this is only a moment of despondency, Sarah.'

'I suppose so,' she agreed, with returning hope. To consider that her present mood represented a right and ultimate conclusion would have been to pronounce a ban on all her activities. 'I've half a mind to propose myself for a visit to Barslett.'

'You couldn't do better,' Lord Glentorly cordially agreed. 'Everything will soon be over here, you see.'

She looked at him a little suspiciously. Did he suggest that she should retreat for a while and let the talk of her failures blow over? He was an old friend, and it was conceivable that he should seek to convey such a hint delicately.

'I had one letter from Trix,' she continued. 'A confused rigmarole—explanations, and defence, and apologies, and all the rest of it.'

'What did you write to her?'

'I didn't write at all. I put it in the fire.'

Glentorly glanced at his friend as she made this decisive reply. Her handsome, rather massive features were set in a calm repose; no scruples or doubts as to the rectitude of her action assailed her. Trix had chosen to jump over the pale; outside the pale she must abide. But that night, when a lady at dinner argued that she ought to have a vote, he exclaimed with an unmistakable shudder, 'By Jove, you'd be wanting to be judges next!' What turned his thoughts to that direful possibility?

But of course he did not let Mrs. Bonfill perceive any dissent from her judgment or her sentence. He contented himself with saying, 'Well, she's made a pretty mess of it!'

'There's nothing left for her—absolutely nothing,' Mrs. Bonfill concluded. Her tone would have excused, if not justified, Trix's making an end of herself in the river.

Lady Glentorly was equally emphatic on another aspect of the case.

'It's a lesson to all of us,' she told her husband. 'I don't acquit myself, much less can I acquit Sarah Bonfill. This taking

up of people merely because they're good-looking and agreeable has gone far enough. You men are mainly responsible for it.'

'My dear!' murmured Glentorly weakly.

'It's well enough to send them a card now and then, but anything more than that—we must put our foot down. The Barmouths of all people! I declare it serves them right!'

'The affair seems to have resulted in serving everybody right,' he reflected. 'So I suppose it's all for the best.'

'Marriage is the point on which we must make a stand.' After a short pause she added an inevitable qualification: 'Unless there are overwhelming reasons the other way. And this woman was never even supposed to be more than decently off.'

'The Barmouths are very much the old style. It was bad luck that she should happen on them.'

'Bad luck, George? It was Sarah Bonfill!'

'Bad luck for Mrs. Trevalla, I mean.'

'You take extraordinary views sometimes, George. Now I call it a Providence.'

In face of a difference so irreconcilable Glentorly abandoned the argument. There were a few like him who harboured a shame-faced sympathy for Trix. They were awed into silence, and the sentence of condemnation passed unopposed.

Yet there were regrets and longings in Mervyn's heart. Veiled under his dignified manner, censured by his cool judgment, hustled into the background by his resolute devotion to the Trans-Euphratic railway and other affairs of state, made to seem shameful by his determination to find a new ideal in a girl of Audrey Pollington's irreproachable stamp, they maintained an obstinate vitality, and, by a perverse turn of feeling, drew their strength from the very features in Trix and in Trix's behaviour which had incurred his severest censure while she was still his and with him.

Remembering her recklessness and her gaiety, recalling her hardly suppressed rebellion against the life he asked her to lead and the air he gave her to breathe, rehearsing even the offences which had, directly or indirectly, driven her to flight and entailed exile on her, he found in her the embodiment of something that he condemned and yet desired, of something that could not be contained in his life, and thereby seemed in some sort to accuse that life of narrowness. She had shown him a country which he could not and would not enter; at moments the thought of her

derisively beckoned him whither he could not go. At last, under the influence of these ideas, which grew and grew as the first shock of amazed resentment wore off, he came to put questions to himself as to the part that he had played, to realise a little how it had all seemed to her. This was not to blame himself or his part; he and it were still to him right and inevitable. But it was a step towards perceiving something deeper than the casual perversity or dishonesty of one woman. He had inklings of an ultimate incompatibility of lives, of ways, of training, of thought, of outlook on the world. Both she and he had disregarded the existence of such a thing. The immediate causes of her flight—her dishonesty and her fear of discovery—became, in this view, merely the occasion of it. In the end he asked whether she had not shown a kind of desperate courage, perhaps even a wild inspiration of wisdom, in what she had done. Gradually his anger against her died away, and there came in its place a sorrow, not that the thing she fled from was not to be, but that it never could have been in any true or adequate sense. Perhaps she herself had seen that—seen it in some flashing vision of despair which drove her headlong from the house by night. Feelings that Trix could not analyse for herself he thought out for her with his slow, narrow, but patient and thorough-going mind. The task was hard, for wounded pride still cried out in loud protest against it; but he made way with it. If he could traverse the path of it to the end, there stood comprehension, yes, and acquiescence; then it would appear that Trix Trevalla had refused to pile error on error; in her blind way she would have done right.

That things we have desired did not come to pass may be sad; that they never could have is sadder, by so much as the law we understand seems a more cruel force than the chance that hits us once, we know not whence, and may never strike again. The chance seems only a perverse accident falling on us from outside; the law abides, a limitation of ourselves. Towards such a consciousness as this Mervyn struggled.

At last he hinted something of what was in his mind to Viola Blixworth. He talked in abstract terms, with an air of studying human nature, not of discussing any concrete case; he was still a little pompous over it, and still entirely engrossed in his own feelings. His preoccupation was to prove that he deserved no ridicule, since fate, and not merely folly, had made him its unwill-

ing plaything. She heard him with unusual seriousness, in an instant divining the direction of his thoughts; and she fastened on the mood, turning it to what she wanted.

‘That should make you tolerant towards Mrs. Trevalla,’ she suggested, as they walked together by the fountains.

‘I suppose so, yes. It leaves us both slaves of something too strong for us.’

She passed by the affected humility that defaced his smile; she never expected too much, and was finding in him more than she had hoped.

‘If you’ve any allowance for her, any gentleness towards her——’

‘I feel very little anger now.’

‘Then tell her so, Mortimer. Oh, I don’t mean go to her. On all accounts you’d better not do that.’ (Her smile was not altogether for Mervyn here; she spared some of it for her duties and position as an aunt.) ‘But write to her.’

‘What should I say?’ The idea was plainly new to him. ‘Do you mean that I’m to forgive her?’

‘I wouldn’t put it quite like that, Mortimer. That would be all right if you were proposing to—renew the arrangement. But I suppose you’re not?’

He shook his head decisively. As a woman Lady Blixworth was rather sorry to see so much decision; it was her duty as an aunt to rejoice.

‘Couldn’t you manage to convey that it was nobody’s fault in particular? Or something like that?’

He weighed the suggestion. ‘I couldn’t go quite so far,’ he concluded, with a judicial air.

‘Well, then, that the mistake was in trying it at all? Or in being in a hurry? Or—or that perhaps your manner——?’

‘No, I don’t think there was anything wrong with my manner.’

‘Could you say you understood her feelings—or, at any rate, allowed for them?’

‘Perhaps I might say that.’

‘At any rate you could say something comforting.’ She put her arm through his. ‘She’s miserable about you, I know. You can say something?’

‘I’ll try to say something.’

‘I know you’ll say it nicely. You’re a gentleman, Mortimer.’

She could not have used a better appeal, simple as it sounded. All through the affair—all through his life, it might be said—he had been a gentleman; he had never been consciously unkind, although he had often been to Trix unconsciously unbearable. Viola Blixworth put him on his honour by the name he revered.

‘You’ll feel better after you’ve done it—and more like settling down again,’ said she. Friendship and auntship mingled. It would comfort Trix to hear that he had no bitterness; it would certainly assist Audrey if he could cease from studying his precise feelings, of any nature whatsoever, about another woman. Lady Blixworth was so accustomed to finding her motives mixed that a moderate degree of adulteration in them had ceased to impair her satisfaction with a useful deed. Besides, is not auntship also praiseworthy? Society said yes, and she never differed from it when its verdicts were convenient.

The letter was written; it was a hard morning’s work, for he penned it as carefully as though it were to go into some archives of state. He would say no more than the truth as he had at last reached it; he said no less with equal conscientiousness. The result was stiff with all his stiffness, but there was kindness in it too. It was not forgiveness; it was acquiescence and a measure of understanding. And he convinced himself more and more as he wrote; in the end he did come very near to saying that there had been mistakes on both sides; he even set it down as a possible hypothesis that the initial error had been his. He had a born respect for written documents, and of written documents not the least of his respect was for his own. He had never felt so sure that there was an end of Trix Trevalla, so far as he was concerned, as when he had put the fact on record over his own signature.

With a sigh he rose and came out into the garden. Audrey sat there reading a novel, which she laid face downwards in her lap at his approach. He took a chair by her, and looked round on the domain that was to be his. Then he glanced at statuesque Audrey. Lady Blixworth viewed them from afar; an instinct told her that the letter had been written. The aunt hoped while the friend rejoiced.

‘He must have proved that he needs quite a different wife from Trix, and where could he find one more different?’ she mused.

'It's beautiful here in summer, isn't it?' he asked Audrey.

'It must be splendid always,' said she.

'I wish public life allowed me to enjoy more of it.' It is what public men generally say.

'Your work is so important, you see.'

He stretched out his legs and took off his hat.

'But you must rest sometimes,' she urged, with an imploring glance.

'So my mother's always telling me. Well, anyhow, since you like Barslett, I hope you'll stay a long time, Miss Pollington.'

It was not much, but Audrey carried it to Lady Blixworth—or, to put the matter with more propriety, she repeated his remark quite casually. It was not poor Audrey's fault if, in self-defence, she had to make the most of such remarks. Lady Blixworth kissed her niece thoughtfully.

'Another year of my life,' she remarked to the looking-glass that evening, in the course of a study of time's ravages—'another year or thereabouts will probably see a successful termination to the affair.'

She smiled a little bitterly. Her life, as she understood the term, had few more years to run, and to give up one was a sacrifice. It was, however, no use trying to alter the Barmouth pace. She had done what she could—a good turn to Trix Trevalla, another little lift for Audrey.

'I'm becoming a regular Sarah Bonfill,' she concluded, as she went down to dinner.

The next Saturday Mrs. Bonfill herself came.

'How is Mortimer?' she whispered at the first opportunity.

'My dear Sarah, I doubt if you could have interfered with more tactfulness yourself.'

'And where's dear Audrey?'

'I hope and believe that she's sticking pins into a map to show where the Trans-Euphratic is to run. Kindly pat me on the back, Sarah.'

Mrs. Bonfill's smile was friendly pat enough, but it was all for Audrey; she asked nothing about Trix Trevalla.

Wide apart as the two were, Trix read the letter with something of the feeling under which Mervyn had written it. He was a good man, but not good for her—that seemed to sum up the matter. Perhaps her first smile of genuine mirth since her fall and flight was summoned to her lips by the familiar stiffness, the

old careful balance of his sentences, the pain by which he held himself back from lecturing. A smile of another kind recognised his straightforwardness and his chivalry; he wrote like a gentleman, as Viola Blixworth knew he would. She was more in sympathy with him when he deplored the gulf between them than when he had told her it was but a ford which duty called on her to pass. 'How much have I escaped, and how much have I lost?' she asked; but the question came in sadness, not in doubt. It was not hers to taste the good; it would have been hers to drink the evil to the dregs. Reading his letter, she praised him and reviled herself; but she rejoiced that she had left him while yet there was time; she rejoiced honestly to see that she would remain in his memory as a thing that was unaccountable, that should not have been, that had come and gone, had given some pain but had done no permanent harm.

'I've got off cheaply,' she thought; her own sufferings were not in her mind, but his; she was glad that her burden of guilt was no heavier. For Mervyn was not as Beaufort Chance; he had done nothing to make her feel that they were quits and her wrongdoing obliterated by the revenge taken for it. She could blame herself less, since even Mervyn seemed to see that, if to begin had been criminal, to go on would have been worse. But bitterness was still in her; her folly seemed still so black, her ruin so humiliating, that she must cry, 'Unfit for him! No, it's for any man that I'm unfit!' Mervyn could but comfort her a little as to what concerned himself; her sin against herself remained unpardoned. And now in her mind that sin had taken on a darker colour; since she had looked in Airey Newton's eyes she could not believe herself the woman who had done such things. The man who, having found the pearl, went and sold all that he had and bought the field where it lay, doubtless did well and was well-pleased. What did the vendor feel who bartered his right for a small price because he had overlooked the pearl?

Mervyn showed her reply to Lady Blixworth—another proof that Aunt Viola was advancing in his confidence, and repressing natural emotions with a laudable devotion to duty. Upon this Lady Blixworth wrote to Peggy Ryle:—

'This letter is not,' she said, 'to praise myself, Peggy, nor to point out my many virtues, but to ask a question. I have indeed done much good. Mortimer is convinced that immutable laws were in fault—and I agree, since the dulness of Barslett and

the family preachiness are absolutely immutable. Trix is convinced too—and again I agree, since Trix is naturally both headlong and sincere, an awful combination if one were married to Mortimer. So I praise myself for having made both of them resigned, and presently to be cheerful! Needless to say, I praise myself on another score, and am backing myself to mother young women against Sarah Bonfill herself (who, by the way, is here, and resettles the Cabinet twice a day—mere bravado, I believe, after her shocking blunders, but Sarah bravadoes with a noble solidity that makes the thing almost a British quality!). I wander! What I really ask—and I want to ask it in italics—is, *Who is she in love with?* Trix, I mean, of course. I am not in telegraphic, telephonic, or telepathic communication with her, but she says in her letter to Mortimer, “I was not fit for you. Am I fit for any man?” My dear, believe your elders when you can, and listen in silence when you can’t! In all my experience I never knew a woman ask that question unless she was in love. Heavens, do we want to be fit for or to please the Abstract Man? Not a bit of it, Peggy! The idea is even revolting, as a thousand good ladies would prove to you. “Am I fit for any man?” Who’s “any man,” Peggy? Let’s have his name and the street where he resides. For my part, I believed there was a man at the back of it all the time—which was no great sagacity—and I said so to Lord Barmouth—which I felt to be audacity. Peggy, tell me his name. “Am I fit for any man?” Poor Trix is still rather upset and melodramatic! But we know what it means. And what are you doing? Do you want a husband? Here am I, started in trade as an honest broker! Come along!’

This letter, Peggy felt, was in a way consoling; she hoped that Trix was in love. But so far as it seemed to be intended to be amusing, Peggy really didn’t see it. The fact is, Peggy was in a mood to perceive wit only of the clearest and most commanding quality. Things were very dark indeed, just these days, with Peggy. However she replied to Lady Blixworth, said she had no notion what she meant, but told her that she was a good friend and a good aunt.

‘The latter statements,’ observed Lady Blixworth complacently, ‘are at the present moment true. As for the former—oh, Peggy, Peggy!’

She was, in fact, rather hurt. A refusal to betray one friend is usually considered a reflection on the discretion of another.

CHAPTER XIX.

NO MORE THAN A GLIMMER.

Forty-eight hours had passed since Peggy Ryle fled from Danes Inn. How they had gone Airey Newton could scarcely tell; as he looked back, they seemed to hold little except the ever-reiterated cry, 'The shame of it—you're rich!' But still the contents of the safe were intact, and no entries had been cancelled in the red-leather book. A dozen times he had taken the book, looked through it, and thrown it from him again. A clash of passions filled him; the old life he had chosen, with its strange, strong, secret delight and its sense of hidden power, fought against the new suggestion. It was no longer of much moment to him that Peggy knew or that it was Peggy's voice which had cried out the bitter reproach. These things now seemed accidental. Peggy or another—it mattered little.

Yet he had sent for Tommy Trent, and reproached him; he was eager to reproach anybody besides himself.

'I told nobody,' protested Tommy, in indignant surprise. Then the thought flashed on him. 'Was it Peggy?' he asked incredulously. Airey's nod started all the story. His view was what Peggy had foreseen; he found no arguments to weigh against that breaking of her word which had made him seem a traitor in the eyes of his friend.

'A woman setting the world right is the most unscrupulous thing in the world,' he declared angrily. 'You believe I never meant to break faith, old fellow? I shall have it out with her, you may be sure.' He paused and then added, 'I can't believe she'll let it go any further, you know.'

To that also Airey seemed more than half-indifferent now; the old furtive solicitude for his secret, the old shame lest it should escape, seemed to be leaving him, or at least to be losing half their force, in face of some greater thing in his mind. He had himself to deal with now—what he was, not what was said or thought of him. But he did not intercede with Tommy's sternness against Peggy; he let it pass.

'I don't blame you. It's done now. You'd better leave me alone,' he said.

Tommy went and sought Peggy with wrath in his heart; but for all these two days she was obstinately invisible. She was

not to be found in Harriet Street, and none of her circle had seen her. It may be surmised that she wandered desolately through fashionable gatherings and haunts of amusement, slinking home late at night. It is certain that she did not wish to meet Tommy Trent, that she would not for the world have encountered Airey Newton. There seemed to be gunpowder in the air of all familiar places ; in the reaction of fear after her desperate venture Peggy withdrew herself to the safety of the unknown.

Airey sat waiting, his eyes constantly looking to the clock. Trix was coming to see him ; she had written that she needed advice, and that he was the only friend she had to turn to in such a matter. 'Peggy is no use to me in the particular way I want help, and I have something to tell which I could tell to nobody but her or you.' He knew what she had to tell ; the fact that she came to tell it to him was proof positive that she had heard nothing from Peggy. He had not forbidden her coming. Though it might be agony to him, yet he willed that she should come ; beyond that point his will was paralysed.

In dainty and costly garb she came, still the vision of riches which had first struck his eyes when he saw her at the beginning of her campaign in London ; yet though this was her outward seeming, her air and manner raised in him a remoter memory, bringing back to mind the pathetic figure at the Paris hotel. It was easy to see that she held no secret of his, and that he had no reproach to fear. Her burden lay in her own secret that she must tell, in the self-reproach against which she had no defence. Of neither part of Peggy's double treachery had she any suspicion.

'Long ago I told you I should come if I got into trouble. Here I am !' Her effort at gaiety was tremulous and ill-sustained.

'Yes, I know you've been in trouble.'

'Oh, I don't mean that. That's all over. It's something else. Will you listen ? It's not easy to say.'

He gave her a chair and stood by the mantelpiece himself, leaning his elbow on it and his chin on his hand. For a minute or two he did not attend to her ; his mind flew back to his own life, to his past work and its success, to those fruits of success which had come to usurp the place not merely of success but of the worthy work itself. She had been stammering out the first part of her story for some while before he turned to her and listened, with sombre eyes set on her nervous face. At that instant she seemed to him an enemy. She had come to rob him.

Why should he be robbed because this woman had been a fool? So put, the argument sounded strong and sensible; it made short work of sentimentality. If he sent her away empty, what harm was done? Tommy Trent would think as he had always thought—no less, no worse. For the rest, it was only to take just offence with the girl who had put him to shame, and to see her no more. The old life, the old delight, held out alluring arms to him.

Trix Trevalla stumbled on, all unconscious of the great battle that she fought for another, anxious only to tell her story truthfully, and yet not so as to seem a creature too abject.

'That's the end of it,' she said at last with a woeful smile. 'After Glowing Stars and the other debts, I may have forty shillings a week or thereabouts. But I want to show you my investments, and I want you to tell me what I ought to sell and what few I might best try to keep. Every pound makes a difference, you know.' The intense conviction of a convert spoke in the concluding words.

'Why do you think I know about such things?'

'Oh, I daresay Mr. Trent would know better, but I couldn't make up my mind to tell him. And I've no right to bother him. I seem to have a right to bother you, somehow.' She smiled again for an instant, and raised her eyes to his. 'Because of what you said at Paris! You remember?'

'You hold me responsible still, I see.'

'Oh, that's our old joke,' she said, fearing to seem too serious in her fanciful claim. 'But still it does always seem to me that we've been in it together; all through it your words have kept coming back, and I've thought of you here. I think you were always in my mind. Well, that's foolish. Anyhow you'll tell me what you think?'

'At least I didn't tell you to trust Fricker.'

'Please don't,' she implored. 'That's the worst of all. That's the thing I can't bear to think of. I thought myself a match for him. And now——!' Her outspread hands accepted any scornful description.

She came to him and put into his hand a paper on which she had drawn up some sort of a statement of her ventures, of her debts, and of her position as she understood it. He took it and glanced through it.

'Heavens, how you spent money!' he exclaimed, in involuntary horror.

She blushed painfully: could she point out how little that had mattered when she was going to be Lady Mervyn?

'And the losses in speculation! You seem never to have been in anything sound!'

'They deceived me,' she faltered. 'Oh, I know all that! Must you say that again? Tell me—what will there be left? Will there be enough to—to exist upon? Or must I'—she broke into a smile of ridicule—'or must I try to work?'

There was a pathetic absurdity about the suggestion. Airey's gruff laugh relieved the sternness of his indignation.

'Yes, I've shown such fine practical talents, haven't I?' she asked forlornly.

'You were very extravagant, but you'd have been in a tolerable position but for Fricker. Dramoffskys and Glowing Stars between them have done the mischief.'

'Yes. If I hadn't cheated him, and he hadn't cheated me in return, I should have been in a tolerable position. But I knew that before I came here, Mr. Newton.'

'Well, it's the truth,' he persisted, looking at her grimly over the top of the paper.

'You needn't repeat it,' she flashed out indignantly. Then her tone changed suddenly. 'Forgive me; it's so hard to hear the truth sometimes, to know it's true, to have nothing to answer.'

'Yes, it is hard sometimes,' Airey agreed.

'Oh, you don't know. You've not cheated and been cheated; you've had nothing to conceal, nothing to lie about, nothing that you dreaded being found out in.' She wrung her hands despairingly.

'I've warned you before now not to idealise me.'

'I can't help it. I believe even your Paris advice was all right, if I'd understood it rightly. You didn't mean that I was to think only of myself and nothing of anybody else, to do nothing for anyone, to share nothing with anyone. You meant I was to make other people happy too, didn't you?'

'I don't know what I meant,' he growled, as he laid her paper on the mantelpiece.

Trix wandered to the window and sat down in the chair generally appropriated to Peggy Ryle.

'I'm sick of myself,' she said.

'A self's not such an easy thing to get rid of, though.'

She glanced at him with some constraint. 'I'm afraid I'm bothering you? I really have no right to make you doleful over my follies. You've kept out of it all yourself; I needn't drag you into it.' She rose as if she would go. Airey Newton stood motionless. It seemed as though he would let her leave him without a word.

She had not in her heart believed that he would. She in her turn stood still for a moment. When he made no sign, she raised her head in proud resentment; her voice was cold and offended. 'I'm sorry I troubled you, Mr. Newton.' She began to walk towards the door, passing him on the way. Suddenly he sprang forward and caught her by the hands.

'Don't go!' he said in a peremptory yet half-stifled whisper.

Trix's eyes filled with tears. 'I thought you couldn't really mean to do that,' she murmured. 'Oh, think of what it is, think of it! What's left for me?'

He had loosed her hands as quickly as he had caught them, and she clasped them in entreaty.

'I'm neither bad enough nor good enough. I tried to marry for position and money. I was bad enough to do that. I wasn't bad enough to go on telling the lies. Oh, I began! Now I'm not good enough or brave enough to face what I've brought myself to. And yet it would kill me to be bad enough and degraded enough to take the only way out.'

'What way do you mean?'

'I can't tell you about that,' she said. 'I should be too ashamed. But some day you may hear I've done it. How am I to resist? Is it worth resisting? Am I worth saving at all?'

She had never seemed to him so much worth saving. And he knew that he could save her, if he would pay the price. He guessed, too, what she hinted at; there was only one thing that a woman like her could speak of as at once a refuge and a degradation, as a thing that killed her and yet a thing that she might come to do. Peggy Ryle had told him that he loved her, and he had not denied it then. Still less could he deny it now, with the woman herself before him in living presence.

She saw that he had guessed what was in her mind.

'Men can't understand women doing that sort of thing, I know,' she went on. 'I suppose it strikes them with horror. They don't understand what it is to be helpless.' Her voice

shook. 'I've had a great deal of hardship, and I can't bear it any more. I'm a coward in the end, I suppose. My gleam of good days has made me a coward at the thought of bad ones again.' She added, after a pause, 'You'll look at the statement and let me know what you think, won't you? It might just make all the difference.' Again she paused. 'It seems funny to stand here and tell you that, if necessary, I shall probably sell myself; that's what it comes to. But you know so much about me already, and—and I know you'd like me if—if it was humanly possible to do anything except despise me. Wouldn't you? So do look carefully at the paper and go into the figures, please. Because I—even I—don't want to sell myself for money.'

What else was he doing with himself? The words hit home. If the body were sold, did not the soul pass too? If the soul were bartered, what value was it to keep the body? Peggy had begged him to save this woman pain; unconsciously she herself asked a greater rescue than that. And she offered him, still all unconsciously, a great salvation. Was it strange that she should talk of selling herself for money? Then was it not strange too that he had been doing that very thing for years, and had done it of deliberate choice, under the stress of no fear and of no necessity? The picture of himself that had been dim, that Tommy Trent had always refused to make clearer, that even Peggy Ryle's passionate reproach had left still but half-revealed, suddenly stood out before his eyes plain and sharp in every outline. He felt that it was a thing to be loathed.

She saw his face stern and contracted with the pain of his thoughts.

'Yes, I've told you all the truth about myself, and that's how you look!' she said.

He smiled bitterly at her mistake, and fixed his eyes on her as he asked:—

'Could you change a man, if you gave yourself to him? Could you drive out his devil, and make a new man of him? Could you give him a new life, a new heart, a new character?'

'I should have no such hopes. My eyes would be quite open.' Her thoughts were on Beaufort Chance.

'No, but couldn't you?' he urged, with a wistful persistence. 'If you knew the worst of him and would still look for something good—something you could love and could use to make the rest better? Couldn't you make him cease being what he hated

being? Couldn't you have a power greater than the power of the enemy in him? If you loved him, I mean.'

'How could I love him?' she asked wonderingly.

'If he loved you?'

'What does such a man mean by love?' she murmured scornfully.

'I wonder if you could do anything like that,' he went on.

'Women have, I suppose. Could you?'

'Oh, don't talk about the thing. I hope I may have courage to throw it aside.'

He started a little. 'Ah, you mean—— No, I was thinking of something else.'

'And how could such a woman as I am make any man better?' She smiled in a faint ridicule of the idea; but she ceased to think of leaving him, and sat down by the table. For the moment he seemed to pay little attention to where she was or what she did; he spoke to her indeed, but his air was absent and his eyes aloof.

'Because, if the woman couldn't, if it turned out that she couldn't, the last state would be worse than the first. Murder added to *felo de se*! There's that to consider.' Now he returned to her in an active consciousness of her presence. 'Suppose you loved a man who had one great—well, one great devil in him? Could you love a man with a devil in him?'

There was a touch of humour hardly won in his voice. Trix responded to it.

'With a thousand, if he was a man after all!'

'Ah, yes, I daresay. But with one—one immense fellow—a fellow who had sat on him and flattened him for years? Could you fight the fellow and beat him?'

Trix thought. 'I think I might have perhaps, before—before I got a devil too, you know.'

'Say he was a swindler—could you keep him straight? Say he was cruel—could you make him kind?' He paused an instant. 'Suppose he was a churl—could you open his heart?'

'All that would be very, very hard, even for a good woman,' said Trix Trevala. 'And you know that in a case something like those I failed before.'

'Because, if you couldn't, it would be hell to you, and worse hell to him.'

'Yes,' murmured Trix. 'That would be it exactly.'

‘But if you could——’ He walked to the window and looked out. ‘It would be something like pulling down the other side of the Inn and giving the sun fair play,’ said he.

‘But could the man do anything for her?’ asked Trix. ‘Something I said started you on this. The man I thought of would do nothing but make the bad worse. If she were mean first, he’d make her meaner; if she lied before, she’d have to lie more; and he’d—he’d break down the last of her woman’s pride.’

‘I don’t mean a man like that.’

‘No, and you’re not thinking of a woman like me.’

‘She’d have to take the place of the thing that had mastered him; he’d have to find more delight in her than in it; she’d have to take its place as the centre of his life.’ He was thinking out his problem before her.

At last Trix was stirred to curiosity. Did any man argue another’s case like this? Was any man roused in this fashion by an abstract discussion? Or if he were dissuading her from the step she had hinted at, was not his method perversely roundabout? She looked at him with inquiring eyes. In answer he came across the room to her.

‘Yet, if there were a man and a woman such as we’ve been speaking of, and there was half the shadow of a chance, oughtn’t they to clutch at it? Oughtn’t they to play the bold game? Ought they to give it up?’

His excitement was unmistakable now. Again he looked in her eyes as he had once before. She could do nothing but look up at him, expecting what he would say next. But he drew back from her, seeming to repent of what he had said, or to retreat from its natural meaning. He wandered back to the hearthrug, and fingered the statement of her position that lay on the mantel-piece. He was frowning and smiling too; he looked very puzzled, very kindly, almost amused.

‘Wouldn’t they be fools not to have a shot?’ he asked presently. ‘Only she ought to know the truth first, and he’d find it deuced hard to tell her.’

‘She would have found it very hard to tell him.’

‘But she would have?’

‘Yes—if she loved him,’ said Trix, smiling. ‘Confession and humiliation comfort women when they’re in love. When they’re not——’ She shuddered. Presumably Barslett came into her mind.

'If he never told her at all, would that be fair?'

'She couldn't forgive that, if she found it out.'

'No?'

'Well, it would be very difficult.'

'But if she never found it out?'

'That would be the grandest triumph of all for her, perhaps,' said Trix very softly. For now, vague, undefined, ignorant still, but yet sure at its mark, had come the idea that somehow, for some reason, Airey Newton spoke not of Beaufort Chance, nor of another, not of some abstraction or some hypothetical man, but of his very self. 'My prayer to him would be not to tell me, and that I might never know on earth. If I knew ever, anywhere, then I should know too what God had let me do.'

'But if he never told you, and some day you found out?'

Trix looked across at him—at his dreary smile and his knitted brow. She amended the judgment she had given a minute before: 'We could cry together, or laugh together, or something, couldn't we?' she asked.

He came near her again and seemed to take a survey of her from the feather in her hat to the toe of her polished boot.

'It's a confounded incongruous thing that you should be ruined,' he grumbled; his tone was a sheer grumble, and it made Trix smile again.

'A fool and her money——' she suggested as a time-honoured explanation. 'But ruin doesn't suit me, there's no doubt of that. Perhaps, after all, I was right to try to be rich, though I tried in such questionable ways.'

'You wouldn't be content to be poor?'

Trix was candid with him and with herself. 'Possibly—if everything else was very perfect.'

He pressed her hard. 'Could everything else seem perfect?'

She laughed uncomfortably. 'You understand wonderfully well, considering——!' A little wave of her arm indicated the room in Danes Inn.

'Yes, I understand,' he agreed gravely.

Again she rose. 'Well, I'm a little comforted,' she declared. 'You and Peggy and the rest of you always do me good. You always seemed the alternative in the background. You're the only thing now—or I'll try to make you. That doesn't sound overwhelmingly cordial, but it's well-meant, Mr. Newton.'

She held out her hand to him, but added as an afterthought,

'And you will tell me what to do about the investments, won't you?'

'And what will you do about the other man?'

Her answer was to give him both hands, saying, 'Help me!'

He looked long at her and at last answered, 'Yes, if you'll let me.'

'Thanks,' she murmured, pressing his hands and then letting them go with a sigh of relief. He smiled at her, but not very brightly; there was an effort about it. She understood that the subject was painful to him, because it suggested degradation for her; she had a hope that it was distasteful for another reason; to her these were explanations enough for the forced aspect of his smile.

He took up the paper again, and appeared to read it over.

'Not a bad list,' he said. 'You ought to be able to realise pretty well, as prices go now; they're not ruling high, you know.'

'What a lot you learn from your eyrie here!'

'All that comes in in business,' he assured her. 'No, they're not so bad, except the speculations, of course.'

'Except Glowing Stars! But, after all, most of them are Glowing Stars.'

He appeared to consider again; then he said slowly, and as though every word cost him a thought, 'I shouldn't altogether despair even of Glowing Stars. No, don't be in a hurry to despair of Glowing Stars.'

'What?' Incredulity cried out in her tone, mingled with the fancied hope of impossible good-fortune. 'You can't conceivably mean that Mr. Fricker is wrong about them? Oh, if that were true!'

'Does it make all that difference?'

'Yes, yes, yes! Not the money only, but the sense of folly—of childish miserable silliness.' She was eager to show him how much that fancied distant hope could mean.

'I promise nothing—but Fricker deceived you before. He lied when he told you they were all right; he may be lying when he tells you they're all wrong.'

'But what good could that do him?'

'If you threw them on the market the price would fall. Suppose he wanted to buy!'

Luckily Trix did not wait to analyse the suggestion; she flew to the next difficulty.

'But the liability?'

'I'll look into it, and let you know. Don't cherish any hope.'

'No, but you must have meant that there was a glimmer of hope?' She insisted urgently, turning a strained agitated face up to his.

'If you'll swear to think it no more than a glimmer—a glimmer let it be.'

'You always tell me the truth. I'll remember—a glimmer.'

'No more,' he insisted, with a marked pertinacity.

'No more, on my honour,' said Trix Trevalla.

She had gone towards the door; he followed till he was by the little table. He stood there and picked up the red book in his hand.

'No more than a glimmer,' he repeated, 'because things may go all wrong in the end still.'

'Not if they depend on you!' she cried, with a gaiety inspired by the hope which he did not altogether forbid, and by the trust that she had in him.

'Even though they depended altogether on me.' He flung the book down and came close to her. 'If they go right, I shall thank heaven for sending you here to-day. And now—I have a thing that I must do.'

'Yes, I've taken a terrible lot of your time. Good-bye.' She yielded to her impulse towards intimacy, towards knowing what he did, how he spent his time. 'Are you going to work? Are you going to try and invent things?'

'No, I'm going to study that book.' He pointed to it with a shrug.

'What's inside?'

'I don't know what I shall find inside,' he told her. 'Good news or bad? The old story or a new one? I can't tell.'

'You don't mean to tell me—that's clear anyhow,' laughed Trix. 'Impertinent questions politely evaded! I take the hint. Good-bye. And, Mr. Newton—a glimmer of hope!'

'Yes, a glimmer,' he said, passing his hand over his brow rather wearily.

'Well, I must leave you to the secrets of the red book,' she ended.

He came to the top of the stairs with her. Half-way down she turned and kissed her hand to him. Her step was a thousand times more buoyant; her smiles came as though native-born

again and no longer timid strangers. Such was the work that a glimmer of hope could do.

To subtract instead of adding, to divide instead of multiplying, to lessen after increase, to draw out instead of paying in—these operations, whether with regard to a man's fame, or his power, or his substance, or even the scope of his tastes and the joy of his recreations, are precisely those which philosophy assumes to teach us to perform gracefully and with no exaggerated pangs. The man himself remains, says popular philosophy; and the pulpit sometimes seconds the remark, adding thereunto illustrative texts. Consolations conceived in this vein are probably useful, even though they may conceal a fallacy or succeed by some pious fraud on the truth. It is a narrow view of a man which excludes what he holds, what he has done and made. If he must lose his grasp on that, part of his true self goes with it. The better teachers inculcate not throwing away but exchange, renunciation here for the sake of acquisition there, a narrowing of borders on one side that there may be strength to conquer fairer fields on the other. Could Airey Newton, who had so often turned in impatience or deafness from the first gospel, perceive the truth of the second? He was left to fight for that—left between the red book and the memory of Trix Trevalla.

But Trix went home on feet lighter than had borne her for many a day. To her nature hope was ever fact, or even better—richer, wider, more brightly coloured. Airey had given her hope. She swung back the baize door of Peggy's flat with a cheerful vigour, and called aloud:—

‘Peggy, where are you? I’ve something to tell you, Peggy.’

For once Peggy was there. ‘I’m changing my frock,’ she cried from her room in a voice that sounded needlessly prohibitory.

‘I want to tell you something,’ called Trix. ‘I’ve been to Airey Newton’s—’

Peggy's door flew open; she appeared gownless; her brush was in her hand, and her hair streamed down her back.

‘Oh, your hair!’ exclaimed Trix—as she always did when she saw it thus displayed.

Peggy's scared face showed no appreciation of the impulsive compliment. ‘You’ve been to Airey’s, and you’ve something to tell me?’ she said, scanning Trix with unconcealed anxiety.

But Trix did not appear to be in an accusing mood; she had no charge of broken faith to launch, or of confidence betrayed.

'I told him how I stood—that I was pretty well ruined,' she explained, 'and he was so kind about it. And what do you think?' She paused for effect. Peggy had recourse to diplomacy; she flung her masses of hair to and fro, passing the brush over them in quick dexterous strokes as they went.

'Well?' she asked, with more indifference than was even polite, much less plausible.

But Trix noticed nothing; she was too full of the news.

'He told me there was a glimmer of hope for Glowing Stars!'

'He said that?'

Peggy's voice now did full justice to the importance of the tidings.

'Yes, hope for Glowing Stars. Peggy, if it should come out right!'

'If it should!' gasped Peggy. 'What did you say he said?'

'That there was hope for Glowing Stars—that I oughtn't to—'

'No, you told me another word; you said he used another word.'

'Oh, yes, he was very particular about it,' smiled Trix.

'And, of course, I mustn't exaggerate. He said there was a glimmer of hope.'

'Ah!' said Peggy. 'I'll come into the other room directly, dear.'

She went back to the looking-glass and proceeded with the task of brushing her hair. Her face underwent changes which that operation (however artistically performed and consistently successful in its effect) hardly warranted. She frowned, she smiled, she grew pensive, she became gloomy, she nodded, she shook her head. Once she shivered as though in apprehension. Once she danced a step, and then stopped herself with an emphatic and angry stamp.

'A glimmer of hope!' she murmured at last. 'And poor dear old Airey's left there in Danes Inn, fighting it out alone!' She joined her hands behind her head, burying them in the thickness of her hair. 'Oh, Airey dear, be good,' she whispered; 'do be good!'

She was so wrapped up in this invocation or entreaty that she quite lost sight of the fact that she herself was relieved of one part of her burden. Trix could not charge her with treachery now. But then it had never been Trix's accusation that she feared the most.

(To be continued.)

THE ARCADIAN CHILDREN.¹

‘ INTO the hand of God, and not of man,
Let me but fall ! ’ So rang King David’s cry,
Who knew both man and God : how partial man,
And God how righteous ; God, who sifts the grain,
Burning the chaff, lest aught that’s sound be lost,
Who saves the city, if but ten be found
Of upright heart ; and man, the hasty judge,
The ready censurer of ill, for good
Half-hearted seeker.

Hear an olden tale
The folk of Caphyæ told Pausanias once,
What time amid the bleak Arcadian hills
He journeyed.

Noon upon the city lay,
The noon of summer ; hushed was labour’s voice,
Unyoked the oxen, every hammer stilled
That shaped the mattock, every stithy dumb ;
High in the cloudless zenith blazed the sun,
And Caphyæ slept and quivered in the heat.
How sweet that slumber, bid the worker say !
But children—light of spirit and free of limb—
Not yet in vassalage to labour—these
The heavy hush of noon draws not to rest,
But more incites to quit the weary town,
The white and dazzling quiet of the streets.
Here swoons the enchanted air ; but there, oh there,
A mile away, amid the sacred trees
Of Artemis be sure the breezes stir !
Never a day so still, but there the oaks
Whisper each other ; there the shade is green,
No blackened shadow of forbidding walls,
But live and chequered with the play of leaves.
‘ Hark ! the cicala calls ! Arsinoe,
Gorgo and Lycus and Polyxena,
Why stay we here ? Forth from the sleepy town !

¹ Pausanias, Book VIII. ch. xxiii.

Seek we the grove and shrine of Artemis,
 To play amid the coolness and the trees.
 So forth the children fared, and reached the grove.
 And swiftly sped the hours amid their play,
 A play tradition-taught, some elder rite
 Forth-shadowing, with measures round the shrine
 Paced solemnly: such meed the goddess claimed;
 Then flowers were gathered and in chaplets wreathed:
 Some piped a childish song: so passed the day.
 But one that played apart by luckless chance
 Lit on a rope, that lay amid the grass
 Coiled like a snake; and be it that a whim
 Of mischief born, or some unkindler trait
 Of nature stirred within him and o'ercame
 White innocence, he noosed and flung the rope
 About the neck of imaged Artemis,
 Then drew it tight, and cried, 'Behold, she dies!
 Behold the goddess, strangled by my hand!'
 Thereat from frightened grasp the flowers fell,
 The play broke off, the snatch of song was stilled
 On childish lips; and pale with awe they grouped
 About the statue; and again 'She dies!'
 He cried, insensate. There were some that laughed,
 Scarce knowing wherefore; terror-struck the rest
 In silence stood awhile; then silently
 All turned and fled, leaving him with his sin.

But he, as one amazed, stood speechless now,
 Facing the statue. And, as men will dare
 Some reckless deed beneath their fellows' gaze,
 From which the unapplauded soul had shrunk,
 So he, alone with his impiety,
 Daunted by solitude, confronting there
 The marble image, in the sightless eyes
 Read condemnation, in a moment knew
 Himself accursèd; with a sobbing breath
 He fell to the earth, still grasping in his hand
 The fatal rope.

Men found him grasping it.
 Oh, but the age was hard. 'What need is here,'
 They cried, 'of witness? Lo, the guilty hand
 Only befits that they should share his doom

Who shared the sacrilege—for who so vile
 As all uncountenanced devise and do
 This deed unspeakable? The doer he,
 But others plotted with him. Seek them out!
 An easy task. What others were with thee?
 Speak, or thou diest straight!’

He named them all,

Gorgo and Lycus and Polyxena,
 Arsinoe and the rest. Nor aught availed
 The cry of innocence, nor mothers’ tears,
 Nor fathers’ groans; the many won the day—
 The cruel many. So the children died
 The death of Stephen.

But in Caphyæ
 As year succeeded year, a horror grew,
 Ever more horrible. Such horror once
 The prophet saw in Israel: to the birth
 The children came, yet never saw the light,
 Dead ere they lived. And all the people cried:
 ‘It may be we have sinned, nor yet assuaged
 The wrath of Artemis. Seek we the shrine
 Of Delphi, question we the Pythian!’
 And back the answer came, ‘Yea, ye have sinned;
 For Artemis abhors the unholy rite
 Of slaughtered children, whom ye took and slew
 For deed of one. What if some laughed with him?
 They laughed in innocence; and he—not sin
 Apollo terms the deed, but ignorance,
 Folly at worst. In men it had been sin.
 Wherefore he bids you gather up the bones,
 The little bones, and lay them in a tomb,
 And offer to them yearly sacrifice;
 So shall your city’s barren plague be stayed.’
 So spake the priestess. They, in humbleness
 Departing, gathered up the little bones,
 Weeping the while, and laid them in a tomb,
 And offered to them yearly sacrifice;
 And so the city’s barren plague was stayed.

‘Into the hand of God, and not of man!’
 Still down the ages echoes David’s cry.

HARRY CHRISTOPHER MINCHIN.

PROSPECTS IN THE PROFESSIONS.

[This article is the first of a series dealing with the Professions from the point of view of a parent who wishes to launch his sons on the world, but who is ignorant both as to the necessary preliminaries and the reasonable prospects in the various careers which are open nowadays to young men. Whether it be the Army, the Navy, or what not, a man whose own experience and connections lie in other walks of life is inevitably at sea on a thousand and one points. He wants to know, in the first place, what is the sort of training best adapted, where it is to be obtained, and what it ought to cost. In some cases, e.g. where the requirements of the Civil Service Commissioners lay down hard and fast rules, the problem is simplified, but even so there are many 'wrinkles' which the parent would be glad to learn and which might save him much expense and disappointment. For those careers to which the approach is by a more varied route, such as Law, Medicine, Commerce, Literature, or the Stage, a plain statement of fact by an expert cannot fail to be of the utmost value. Then comes the question of the advantages and disadvantages of the various professions, what are the absolutely essential qualifications for success in each, what are the deficiencies which are bound to produce failure. In some occupations an early competence is balanced by the lowness of the ultimate reward; in others brilliant prizes are discounted by a multitude of dismal blanks. Elsewhere again an inadequate salary finds compensation in an adventurous life or a dignified position, in social prestige or in the certainty of a pension. These are considerations which a young man is apt to ignore, but with which a prudent father should acquaint himself. It is of the first importance that the parent should know approximately at any rate what is the amount which he may reasonably be called upon to pay in the form of allowance, premium, outfit, &c., and how long it should be before his son is in a position of independence, comparative or absolute.]

Future articles will deal with the Army, with both branches of the Legal profession, with the calling of a schoolmaster, with the Stage, with the career of the City man, the Doctor, the Land-agent, and the Engineer, possibly with other occupations. In each case the greatest care has been taken to choose the most competent and 'expert' hand to enlighten the public on the inner mysteries of the vocation; but for reasons which will be obvious it has been decided that the anonymity of the writer should in each case be respected.—ED. CORNHILL.]

I. THE ROYAL NAVY.

A LOVE of the sea, and more especially of the naval service, seems to be hereditary among the boys of this country; and when this incipient feeling has been strengthened by a knowledge of the heroic deeds of their forefathers and of the gallant actions which have led to Britain obtaining the proud position that she now occupies, the longing for a life on the ocean wave usually becomes more intense. This strong desire for a nautical career is sometimes, however, a spurious and transitory one, which has been

produced by the love of adventure that is natural in all healthy boys, worked upon by a course of reading of more or less sensational stories of hairbreadth 'scapes and perils encountered and overcome, and possibly brought to a head by the appearance of a friend or old schoolfellow in all the glories of a new uniform adorned with a glittering badge and gilt buttons. It should not be difficult, however, to distinguish between the two feelings; and when the inclination is genuine it behoves a parent to consider the question in all its bearings, and decide whether it may not be advisable to yield to his son's wishes and endeavour to get him into the Navy.

The subject has to be looked at from many points of view, the first of which, in the case of a professional man, will be that of expense; but this will vary according to which branch of the profession the aspiring seaman may select for his future vocation. In the executive or combatant line the prospective admiral will require at least fifty pounds a year for the first six years of his career, in addition to the cost of outfits, and probably some assistance for a year or two after he has obtained his commission; but a youngster who enters the accountant's or paymaster's department is theoretically, if not practically, self-supporting when after twelve months' service he becomes clerk; while those, again, who join as engineer students will require to be maintained for five years at a cost of 40*l.* per annum, exclusive of uniforms, &c. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that the course of study which the preparation for any other profession entails would cost considerably more than this, while the ultimate competence which it is possible to secure, though not so large as that enjoyed by the leading members of the medical or legal professions or the shining lights in science or art, is far more certain and satisfactory for the rank and file, not many of whom in the professions mentioned could withdraw into private life at forty-five with an income of 300*l.* per annum, which may be the retiring allowance of a naval lieutenant.

When these points are satisfactorily settled the next query is as to whether the boy is physically and mentally suitable for the service. A first-class condition of health is an absolute necessity for any one who wishes to serve his Majesty at sea, and much disappointment and trouble may be saved by taking the precaution to have the boy medically examined by the family doctor previous to seeking a nomination or entering him for competition.

Candidates are required to be free from any defect of body, impediment of speech, or defect of sight or hearing. They must not show any predisposition to constitutional or hereditary disease or weakness of any kind; they must be well developed and active, and have good sound teeth. This applies to all branches of the service, the only exception being in the accountant department, for which a candidate who is short-sighted may be accepted if he is suitable in all other respects. With regard to mental development, it is necessary, in order to succeed in the Navy, especially in the combatant branch, that a youth should possess considerable intellectual capacity, not only to enable him to pass the qualifying examination, but to give him an average chance of competing with his brother officers for the prizes of the profession. For the day has gone by when the fool of the family could be sent to sea with a fair prospect of success, if possessed of courage, determination, and good luck. The executive naval officer of to-day has to combine in his person the proficiency of the advanced mathematician, the ingenuity of the expert engineer, and the skill of the trained gunner, in addition to presence of mind, facility of resource, the gift of diplomacy, and a knowledge of international law and strategy.

All being well so far, we now come to the boy's preparation for the examination, and respecting this there is naturally some little difference of opinion; but for the ordinary boy, who is neither a dunce nor a genius, we consider, from practical experience, that the best method of procedure is to place him at a decent school, where special attention is paid to the subjects which will be useful to him, and where he will not be required to waste his time on irrelevant matters, until a few months before his examination, when he should be sent to a good coach or 'crammer's' to be finished off. Many people have an unfounded prejudice against 'crammers' and all their ways; but it stands to reason that a tutor who is continually preparing boys for one particular examination must be more conversant with the shoals and rocks which it is necessary to avoid, and better able to steer the candidate to the desired haven of success, than another, however clever he may be, who is not in touch with the educational test in question.

Presuming it is settled that the boy is to enter the Navy if possible, the next question that arises is naturally in what capacity is he to serve his King and country; and the decision

with regard to this must depend upon a variety of circumstances. First of all there comes the question of age, for a candidate for a naval cadetship, which is the first step on the ladder that leads to captain and admiral, must be between fourteen and a half and fifteen and a half at the date of his examination. For an engineer studentship an extra year is given, the ages being fourteen and a half and sixteen and a half; while to be qualified for an assistant-clerkship in the accountant department a youth must be between seventeen and eighteen years of age. It is on account of this advantage of age that so many youngsters who would otherwise have joined the combatant branch, but were incapacitated either through being too old or not being sufficiently prepared for the examination, have sought refuge in the accountant line, which has come to be looked upon as a sort of overflow from the executive branch.

Then, again, there is the matter of nomination to be considered; for while engineer students are at present permitted to enter the service by means of an open competitive examination, those who are desirous of becoming naval cadets or assistant-clerks must previously obtain a nomination. The First Lord of the Admiralty is the chief source of nominations, but members of the Board and the secretaries have a limited number at their disposal, while admirals, commodores, and captains on their first appointment have the privilege of giving one nomination—which, by the way, they usually bestow upon a son of one of their brother officers; for nothing is more hereditary than the Navy. There are hundreds of families in which son has followed father for several generations. In addition to the nominations given to the general public there are six naval cadetships bestowed annually on the sons of residents in Greater Britain, upon the recommendation of the Colonial Secretary, seven reserved for the sons of officers in the Navy, Army, or Marines, and one each for the mercantile training-ships *Worcester* and *Conway*, while one nomination to an assistant-clerkship is given every year to the son of a naval officer who has died in the performance of his duty, which enables the candidate to pass in with simply a qualifying examination in place of a competitive one. Further particulars respecting the forthcoming examinations and all necessary qualifications for a nomination may be obtained on application either to the Secretary of the Admiralty or to the Civil Service Commissioners, Burlington Gardens, London, W., while the latest infor-

mation regarding the subjects of examination, age, &c., will be found in the quarterly 'Navy List,' published by Eyre & Spottiswoode.

Previous to entering more fully into the question of cost it may be as well to trace the career of a typical naval officer, so as to give an idea of the probabilities of advancement and the possibilities of ultimate success in the profession. We will presume that at the age of fifteen he succeeds in satisfying the Civil Service Commissioners that he has a competent knowledge of mathematics, Latin, geography, English, French, and drawing. He will then be appointed to H.M.S. *Britannia*, the naval cadets' training-ship at Dartmouth. The *Britannia*, an old wooden three-decker, is moored with the *Hindustan* in Dartmouth Harbour, but as soon as the college which is being erected within sight of the ship is completed the cadets will be transferred to the new building. The course of study extends for four terms—fifteen months in all—during which they are taught navigation, nautical astronomy, seamanship, rowing, swimming, and other subjects necessary to them in their future calling. Great care is bestowed upon them, with regard to both their mental and physical development, during this period of probation, and they are encouraged to perfect themselves in athletic pursuits, as well as to qualify themselves for passing their examination at the end of the time, according to their position in which they are sent to sea—either as midshipmen, or as naval cadets with six or twelve months to serve before they can mount the little white patch on the collar which since the middle of the eighteenth century has been the distinguishing mark of a middy's rank.

An intermediate examination has to be negotiated after three years at sea; and when the young man is nineteen, if he has four years and a half sea-time to his credit, he is eligible to be examined for his commission as sub-lieutenant. This is really the most important epoch in his career, for if he fails to pass after two attempts he has to leave the service, while according to the proficiency which he shows in the seamanship, navigation, torpedo, gunnery, and pilotage in which he is examined, so will a shorter or longer period elapse before he obtains his promotion to lieutenant. Thus, if he gains five first-class certificates he receives his lieutenant's commission as soon as he has completed his five years' sea-service; otherwise he has to serve a varying period as sub-lieutenant with 5s. a day. It is at this time that

he has the opportunity of joining the navigating department, if he wishes to do so, and is qualified for the position, which carries with it from 2*s.* 6*d.* a day for a sub-lieutenant up to 5*s.* a day for a commander, as extra pay. As a sub-lieutenant messes in the gun-room with the junior officers his expenses are very slightly increased, and it is possible for him to live upon his pay, especially if he has the navigating allowance; but he will have to be economical, and without any extravagant habits, in order to make both ends meet.

We will suppose that he obtains his lieutenant's commission when he is twenty-one, which it is quite possible for him to do. He will then be in receipt of 182*l.* 10*s.* a year, with partial board and lodging, which is far more than the average professional man ashore is ever able to earn at that age. This income, again, is capable of increase by 2*s.* 6*d.* a day for undertaking navigating work, 3*s.* 6*d.* a day for gunnery, or 3*s.* 6*d.* for torpedo—always presuming that he will work and qualify himself for the duties. A lieutenant's pay continues to increase until he obtains 14*s.* a day after twelve years in that rank, but he is eligible for promotion to commander after four years' service. As, however, at the time of writing there are over seven hundred lieutenants with more than four years' seniority, this qualification does not seem to count for much.

There is no doubt but that the lieutenant's rank is the great sandbank in the way of promotion upon which the majority of officers stick, only the fortunate ones being washed over by exceptional merit—which, again, is of no use unless the possessor has the opportunity given to him of exhibiting it—or towed off by family or professional interest. In no profession does every member reach the topmost round of the ladder. It is a case of the survival of the fittest, and many fall out by the way; others lose their youthful energy and cease to struggle upwards; while a certain proportion who are lacking in ambition are more or less content in their subordinate position. Between thirty-five and forty years ago sixty-five youngsters of from twelve to fourteen years of age competed for thirty naval cadetships, and of these thirty there are at the time of writing seven only whose names appear in the 'Navy List'—two captains on the active list, and on the retired list two captains, one commander, and two lieutenants.

However, to return to the possibilities of the Navy, a lieu-

tenant is eligible for promotion to commander after four years' service, when his pay is increased to 1*l.* a day, with 2*s.* 6*d.* to 3*s.* 9*d.* a day extra when in separate command, and 4*s.* to 5*s.* a day more if appointed for navigating duties. Two years' sea-service as commander qualifies him for promotion to captain; but in the piping times of peace such speedy advancement is out of the question. Captains are paid according to their seniority, the first sixty-five on the list receiving 602*l.* 5*s.* a year, the next sixty-five 501*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*, and the remainder 410*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* per annum. In addition to this they have allowances, when in command, varying from 7*s.* to 18*s.* a day.

The next step upwards is rear-admiral, of whom there are at present thirty-seven with 3*l.* a day. Then come twenty-one vice-admirals with 4*l.* a day; then ten admirals with 5*l.*; and finally five admirals-of-the-fleet, who receive 6*l.* per diem. These gentlemen, when on active service, all have extra pay in the shape of table-money, which amounts to from 1*l.* 10*s.* to 4*l.* 10*s.* a day, according to the rank they hold and the hospitality they have to provide.

Any officer may be compelled to retire in the event of ill-health which prevents him performing his duty, and all have to retire at stated ages, with pensions or retired pay commensurate with their length of service. The age at which admirals-of-the-fleet have to retire is seventy, and their allowance is 1,222*l.* 15*s.* per annum; admirals and vice-admirals have to 'go on the shelf' at sixty-five, and receive 850*l.* and 725*l.* respectively; while rear-admirals have to give up active service at sixty on 600*l.* a year. The maximum age for captains is fifty-five, for commanders fifty, and lieutenants forty-five, when they must beat their swords into ploughshares and retire into private life with incomes of from 300*l.* to 600*l.* a year for the first, 182*l.* to 400*l.* for the second, and from 152*l.* to 300*l.* a year for the last-named officers.

When considering the pros and cons of the Navy as a profession it must be kept in mind that, though the pay in any of the ranks cannot be considered excessive, yet there are compensating advantages of a really substantial character, which should not be lost sight of. Honour and glory, if he is fortunate enough to be anywhere in the neighbourhood when hard knocks are being exchanged; social position, for a naval officer has the *entr  e* anywhere; a life full of change and variety, which, if it does not possess the simple comforts of the domestic fireside, has

the cheerful companionship of friends and shipmates to make up for it; partial board and lodging, with medical attendance while at work, and a sufficiency to keep him as a gentleman in his old age; and, last, but not least, the knowledge that in the event of preceding her to that bourne whence no traveller returns his widow will be provided for and his children not forgotten—these are some of the more solid advantages which the Navy has to offer.

We will now give an outline of the probable career of a youth who enters the accountant branch of the Navy as assistant-clerk, at which time he must be between seventeen and eighteen years of age. The method of entry is by limited competition, the candidates being nominated by the First Lord of the Admiralty, to whose secretary at Whitehall application should be made for the youth's name to be placed on the list. Full particulars as to the qualifications, as to health, character, and ability to swim, may be obtained on application to the Admiralty. The examination, which comprises mathematics, English, Latin, French, and geography, with shorthand, German, drawing, and natural science as voluntary subjects, having been passed, the youngster receives his appointment as assistant-clerk and proceeds to sea, with 2*s.* 6*d.* a day which has to be supplemented by his parent or guardian by 20*l.* a year paid half-yearly in advance. After having served twelve months as assistant-clerk, the youth is supposed to have got 'the hang' of the office, and is examined in arithmetic and the manner of keeping the ship's books, and if found qualified he is rated as clerk with 4*s.* a day, after which any allowance from home is considered unnecessary, though, as we shall show further on, he would probably still require some assistance with his outfitter. When he is twenty-one, a clerk is eligible and should pass for assistant-paymaster, the examination being chiefly technical with reference to the duties which he has been performing in the office. He now starts with 5*s.* a day, which is increased every three years until after twelve years he obtains 11*s.* 6*d.* a day, and so long as he lives in the gun-room with the junior officers, his expenses are not great and he ought to be able to keep himself.

Promotion to paymaster comes by seniority, but there are many snug little appointments which can be filled by assistant-paymasters, such as that of secretary to a flag officer, or accountant officer in charge of a small craft, which are bestowed

upon reliable and energetic young men who have succeeded in obtaining the confidence of the powers that be, and these carry with them extra pay. Paymasters commence with 14*s.* a day, and rise by seniority to the position of staff and fleet paymasters, with a maximum pay of 600*l.* a year, with allowances when in charge of *dépôt* or flag-ships of from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.* a day extra. Paymasters of all ranks are compulsorily retired at the age of sixty with the possibility of 450*l.* a year, while those with more than twenty years' service are entitled to the honorary rank of paymaster-in-chief. For this branch of the service the duties are comparatively light, for accountant officers, though occupied in the office during the day, have no night watch to keep, and once the routine of the office is acquired and the art of calculating rates of exchange, receiving and issuing stores, &c., attained, there is nothing more to learn, though the position of paymaster is a responsible one, as he is in charge of the ship's cash-box and is answerable for its contents.

The next department for us to glance at is that of the engineers, respecting whom it may be as well to say a few words, for a great change is taking place in the position and status of these officers, and though it is not wise to prophesy unless you know, it seems to us a still greater one is on the cards. Away back in the dim past every fighting vessel carried a sailing crew and a military contingent, respectively commanded by a seaman and a soldier, a knight in full armour for preference, but this was found to work badly, and the two departments were generally blended into one; though the sailing master was retained and with his subordinate officers was responsible for the navigation and pilotage of the ship. Some thirty years ago, it occurred to the Admiralty that this condition of things was an anomaly, for as the combatant officers had to study navigation and work out the reckoning every day, and the captain was responsible for the safety of his ship although the master navigated her, the navigating branch was clearly a superfluous one. Consequently, after a little coquetting with second-class cadets, they ceased to enter master's assistants, then the rank of second master was done away with, and finally the two branches of the service combined, and it appears to us that sooner or later the same process will take place with the engineers. Now that sails have been dispensed with, and our ships are propelled entirely by steam, we are in the same position that we were a thousand years ago, with two

crews on board, one to fight, and the other to attend to the vessel's progress through the water. A knowledge of steam is even now considered essential in a combatant officer, and as time goes on, and machinery is more and more multiplied, this will become more and more essential until history repeats itself, and the two lines are amalgamated into one. The prejudice that existed in the old days against this most important department has entirely disappeared. The officers are now well-educated and intelligent men and they are received on board on an equal footing, and so long as they conduct themselves as 'officers and gentlemen,' as the service phrase goes, they need never be afraid of the manner in which they will be treated by their messmates.

At present there are three modes of becoming an engineer, as probationary assistant-engineer, assistant-engineer for temporary service, and engineer student, and the latter mode we will describe first. A candidate must be between fourteen and a half and sixteen and a half, of good character and in excellent health. No nomination is yet required for this examination, which is held once a year in London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Portsmouth, and Devonport by the Civil Service Commissioners, from whom or from the Under-Secretary of the Admiralty full information respecting the qualifications may be obtained. The successful competitors after having satisfied the doctors are sent to the Training College at Devonport, in order to undergo a five years' course of instruction, in iron shipbuilding, the construction and working of marine engines, electric light, torpedo and gun machinery, mathematics, physics, and such other subjects as are likely to be of use to them in their future profession. During this period parents have to pay 40*l.* a year towards their sons' maintenance, and find them in uniform and other necessities, but the students receive pay at the rate of 1*s.* a week for the first year, 2*s.* for the second, 3*s.* for the third, 5*s.* for the fourth, and 8*s.* a week for the fifth year.

Presuming that they give satisfaction to their instructors, and show their proficiency at the various examinations, they are, on passing the final test at the end of the five years, appointed probationary assistant-engineers, obtaining sea time, which tells for promotion and pension, according to the number of marks they receive; while those who get sixty per cent. or over of possible marks are sent to the Royal Naval College at Greenwich for

further instruction. Probation lasts for twelve months, which is passed either at the College or in one of the dockyard reserves, during which they are paid 6s. a day with 1s. 6d. a day in lieu of provisions. At the end of this time, if their conduct qualifications are all that could be desired, they are confirmed in their rank as assistant-engineers; those who took first-class certificates receiving 7s. 6d. a day, while those who were not so successful have to wait, respectively, three, six, nine, or twelve months for the increase of pay.

Another way of entering the service as an engineer is available for those who are between twenty and twenty-one years of age, and who have received practical instruction in some good engine works for at least four years. If they can produce certificates of skill as mechanical engineers, good character, and ability to swim, they may offer themselves for examination for the position of assistant-engineers for temporary service. The examination is in practical engineering, and those who are successful have subsequently to pass the medical officers, after which they receive their appointments with 7s. 6d. a day. After four years' service an assistant-engineer for temporary service is eligible for examination for engineer, and if he passes this test he is transferred to the permanent list.

The third way of becoming a naval engineer is by direct entry as probationary assistant-engineer. Applications for permission to be examined must be made to the Secretary of the Admiralty at Whitehall, and candidates must be between twenty and twenty-three years of age, in excellent health, of good moral character, and able to swim. They must also have attended an engineering course at an approved technical college, for not less than one year, and have been under training in an engineering establishment for not less than three years. The examination is a somewhat searching one, but those who are successful are appointed probationary assistant-engineers for twelve months, during which they are paid 6s. a day with 1s. 6d. towards their mess expenses, and then if everything is satisfactory they are confirmed in their rank with 7s. 6d. a day.

Thus any young man who wishes to join this branch of the naval service has every opportunity of so doing. If his own age and his father's circumstances permit it, he may become an engineer student. If he has already had some experience with marine engines and is a clever engineer, he can, by passing a

purely technical examination, become an assistant-engineer for temporary service, and if he has been through the ordinary training which is undergone by those who intend to adopt engineering as their profession, he can undergo a qualifying examination, the subjects of which can be obtained by writing to the Admiralty, and enter as probationary assistant-engineer. By whichever method he may have entered the service we will presume that the young man has served from four to five years as assistant-engineer—the difference in time depends upon the proficiency shown at the last examination—when he will be eligible for promotion to engineer after having passed the qualifying examination. For the first four years an engineer receives 10s. a day, for the second four years 11s. a day, and after eight years' service 12s.

Engineers are promoted by seniority, according to the number of vacancies in the ranks above them, to chief and then fleet engineers, when their pay is increased to from 16s. to 30s. a day according to length of service. This method of promotion, which, tempered by selection in certain cases, is the usual one all through the Navy, was the arrangement which, in old days, gave rise to the popular toast 'Here's to a sickly season, and a bloody war!' Naval men are not so brutally frank now, but the feeling which provoked that sentiment must still linger in the breasts of only too many neglected and impatient sufferers.

Above the fleet engineers, there are thirteen inspectors of machinery; six chief inspectors of machinery, whose pay is respectively 35s. and 2*l.* a day; and one engineer-in-chief. Those officers who are in charge of engines obtain allowances of from 1s. to 5s. a day, and 1s. a day when attached to the steam reserve.

Engineers are compulsorily retired at the age of forty-five on a possible 150*l.* a year, or if they are allowed to serve beyond that age, which is sometimes the case, they may get as much as 187*l.* per annum. Fleet and chief engineers are put on the shelf at fifty-five with a maximum allowance of 450*l.*, according to their time at sea, while inspectors of machinery are permitted to serve until they are sixty, when they retire on 500*l.* a year, chief inspectors getting 550*l.* and the engineer-in-chief 600*l.*

We will now proceed to ascertain the approximate cost of launching a youth into the Navy in any one of the three branches which we have described, commencing with the naval cadet.

	£
Say three months at tutor's	25
Outfit for training ship	60
Maintenance on board <i>Britannia</i>	100
Sextant in third term	7
Travelling expenses and extras, say	20
First seagoing outfit	80
Compulsory allowance, say six years	300
Second outfit	60
Sub-lieutenant's outfit	70
	<hr/> 722

This is the lowest possible figure at which it could be put, and as a matter of fact another 100*l.* at least will be required for incidental expenses and extra tips, as may be gathered from the following list of absolutely necessary disbursements:

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Mess subscription	2	5	0	a month =	27	0	0 a year.
Wine subscription, average	12	6	„		7	10	0 „
Marine servant	10	0	„		6	0	0 „
Hammock man	2	6	„		1	10	0 „
Extra provisions	1	10	0	„	18	0	0 „
Naval instructor					5	0	0 „
					<hr/> 65	<hr/> 0	<hr/> 0

Now as a midshipman's pay is 1*s.* 9*d.* a day, which with the parental 50*l.* amounts to 81*l.* 18*s.* 9*d.* per annum, it follows that he only has 16*l.* 18*s.* 9*d.* left for such unconsidered trifles as washing, repairs, band subscriptions, regatta funds, and last, but not least, spending money when he goes ashore on leave, so that if he can make both ends meet without occasional assistance from home, he is an exception to the general rule.

But even if we take the lump sum at 900*l.*, the result will compare very favourably with the expenses which have to be incurred in starting a young man under good auspices in any other profession.

In the accountant's department the cost will not be so great and the return more immediate.

	£
Say three months at a tutor's	25
Outfit	60
Maintenance while assistant-clerk	20
Extras and incidentals three years, say	50
Assistant paymaster's outfit	80
	<hr/> 235

The engineer student has to pass a longer noviciate and so the expense is higher.

	£
Three months with a coach	25
Uniforms to last three years	20
Second supply	20
Underclothing, &c.	15
Annual expenses, 25 <i>l</i>	125
Maintenance, 40 <i>l</i> . a year	200
	<hr/> 405

For this sum a youth obtains the finest mechanical training and practical education in the world, and becomes at once self-supporting.

Having now exhausted the subject of youthful entry into the Navy, which appeals more especially to parents and guardians, we will take up that of adult entry, which more particularly affects those who have arrived at the age of discretion and are capable of thinking for themselves without the risk of being led astray by the glamour of romance. The first opening that we come to is that of chaplain, whose duties on board a man-of-war are to conduct morning prayers, and carry out the usual services on Sunday. He has to visit the sick, and comfort and admonish those who are in need of his assistance. He has to superintend the naval schoolmaster in his work, instruct the young gentlemen and others, who may desire it, in the principles of the Christian religion, and supervise the ship's library. He must not be over thirty-five years of age, and must not at the time of application hold any benefice for the cure of souls, but must have been ordained deacon and priest of the Church of England or admitted to holy orders by the lawful authority of one of the Churches which are in communion with it. He has to produce testimonials from the bishop of his diocese and pass a medical examination. The pay of a chaplain commences at 12*s*. a day, and after five years is increased to 13*s*., rising by degrees to 40*l*. 10*s*. a year. He is compelled to retire at the age of sixty, and the highest retiring pay which he can obtain is 450*l*. a year. His widow is eligible for a small pension, and his children have allowances as in the case of ordinary naval officers. A clergyman in priest's orders is allowed to take temporary service in the Navy, without any restrictions as to age, and may be appointed acting chaplain, receiving the same pay as chaplain, but not being entitled to half-pay, pension, or retiring allowance. Some chaplains combine with their sacred office the duties of naval instructor, when in addition to their pay as before mentioned

they receive half the naval instructor's pay and his tuition allowance for teaching the young gentlemen.

The duties of a naval chaplain cannot be termed onerous, and a man who is fond of travel and likes a sea life, and who has some intellectual pursuit upon which he can rely to assist him in passing the spare time of which he has an abundance, will find plenty of opportunity for doing his Master's work; while to a naturalist or botanist the chances of following his favourite pursuit are illimitable. There are some half-dozen or more livings attached to Greenwich Hospital, which are always bestowed upon naval chaplains, and the holders are allowed to receive their retired pay in addition; while if a chaplain has served for ten years he may obtain permission from the Admiralty to accept a living ashore, taking with him a pension commencing at 50*l.* and increasing to 100*l.* a year, after fifteen years at sea.

We mentioned above that some chaplains also act as naval instructors. A gentleman who is desirous of instructing our young sea lions must be between twenty and thirty-five years of age, and after having satisfied the Medical Director General as to his fitness for the service, he has to pass a preliminary examination, most of which is excused to those who are graduates of any university, or who have obtained the equivalent distinction to that of Senior Optime at Cambridge, or a second-class in one public mathematical examination at Oxford. Successful candidates are sent to the Royal Naval College at Greenwich for a further course of instruction, which will not exceed six months and may be shortened if they are capable of passing the qualifying examination sooner, and during this time they receive 6*s.* a day and 1*s.* 6*d.* towards mess expenses. The examination, particulars of which may be obtained on application to the Under-Secretary of the Admiralty, Whitehall, comprises navigation, nautical astronomy, and surveying, the use of instruments, meteorology, physics, and the steam engine.

A naval instructor is paid on the same scale as a chaplain, commencing at 219*l.* a year, and running up by increments of 1*s.* a day until the maximum of 401*l.* 10*s.* is arrived at, but an instructor also receives 5*l.* a year from each young gentleman whom he teaches, and half the chaplain's pay if he is qualified to fulfil the duties of the gentleman whom Jack sometimes terms 'the sky pilot.' The retiring age is fifty-five, and the highest retiring pay is 400*l.* a year, but like all other officers they may

retire earlier if they choose to do so on a smaller allowance. The duties of a naval instructor are purely scholastic, and his chief *raison d'être* is to prepare the junior combatant officers for their examinations.

Now we come to the one who is certainly the most indispensable among those who form the civil branch of the Navy, and that is the doctor, whose work is, next to the man in the conning tower, perhaps the most important on board; for in order that every man shall be in a condition to do his duty it is absolutely necessary that he shall possess the *mens sana in corpore sano*; and that this is so depends to a great extent upon the surgeon, and though he may not have received the credit for it, there is little doubt but that many a fight has been won through the naval doctor. Any medical man between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-eight, who is registered under the Medical Act as qualified to practise medicine and surgery in Great Britain and Ireland, is of good character and can pass the health test, is eligible to be examined for the appointment of surgeon in the Royal Navy. The examination is entirely technical, but great importance is attached to operative surgery, as a competent knowledge of this subject is absolutely essential. Successful candidates receive their commissions as surgeons at once, but they have to go through a course of instruction in naval hygiene at Haslar Hospital before they go to sea. A surgeon on entry receives 11s. 6d. a day, which rises by increments of 2s. to 15s. 6d. after eight years' service. The next step is staff surgeon, who is paid 21s. a day and 24s. after four years, while a fleet surgeon has from 27s. to 33s. a day. There are twelve deputy-inspector-generals of hospital who draw 2l. 2s. a day, and five inspector-generals who have 2l. 15s. per diem. These latter gentlemen are retired at sixty or sixty-two on 730l. and 638l. 15s. respectively; while surgeons, irrespective of rank, are obliged to withdraw at fifty-five with from 365l. to 456l. 5s. a year according to length of service.

Although they are soldiers, and good ones too, as they have proved in many a stiffly contested fight, yet the Marines form a branch of the Royal Navy, and are managed by the Admiralty and not the War Office, which possibly accounts for their efficiency. One of the advantages enjoyed by the Marines is that an officer is enabled to live upon his pay without getting into debt or being looked down upon by his messmates, which is not

the case in all regiments. The Marines are divided into artillery and infantry, blue and red, from the colour of their coats; the blue marines having the precedence and receiving higher pay than the others.

Candidates for the Royal Marine Artillery must be within the ages of sixteen and eighteen, five feet five inches in height with proportionate chest, and capable of passing a strict medical examination. Admission is obtained by means of the open competitive examination for the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, which is held in June and November every year; the vacant commissions being offered to the successful candidates in order of merit. Application for permission to be examined has to be made to the Civil Service Commissioners, Burlington Gardens, and notice must be given to the Secretary of the Admiralty at the same time. Successful competitors are appointed second lieutenants, and sent to the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, for two years, during which time they receive 5s. 3d. a day, and after the first two terms 1s. 6d. a day mess money.

Those who are successful in the examination at the end of the college course are despatched to Portsmouth to study gunnery in H.M.S. *Excellent* and torpedo in the *Vernon*. Having passed in these subjects the second lieutenant is promoted to lieutenant, with seniority according to the marks he has gained in the three examinations, and is then sent to the headquarters of his corps to learn his drill and multifarious duties ashore and afloat. A lieutenant receives from 5s. 7d. to 7s. 10d. a day after ten years' service; captains from 12s. 1d. to 14s. 1d.; majors from 14s. 1d. to 16s.; lieutenant-colonel 18s.; colonel second commandant 26s. 3d.; and colonel commandant 2l. a day. On compulsory retirement, general officers at sixty-five receive the full pay of a commandant; colonels commandant at sixty get 600l. a year; lieutenant-colonels at fifty-four obtain 450l.; majors at forty-eight have 300l.; and captains at forty-two receive 225l. per annum.

Candidates for the Royal Marine Light Infantry have to be between seventeen and nineteen years of age, not less than five feet five inches in height, and in good physical health. They obtain admission to the corps by means of the open competitive examination for the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, which is held twice a year in June and November, when vacant commissions are offered to the successful candidates in order of merit. Application must be made to the Civil Service Commissioners,

and notice sent to the Admiralty in the same manner as for the R.M.A. One commission is given annually to the son of a marine officer who has been killed in action or died on service, which carries with it only the necessity of a qualifying examination. Successful candidates are appointed second lieutenants with 5*s.* 3*d.* a day and sent to the Naval College for two terms, at the end of which period they are again examined, and if they succeed in satisfying the examiners, they are at once appointed lieutenants and sent to the headquarters of their division to be instructed in drill and such other things as it is needful for them to learn previous to going to sea. The pay in the Light Infantry is somewhat lower than in the Artillery: a lieutenant gets from 5*s.* 3*d.* to 7*s.* 6*d.* a day; a captain from 11*s.* 7*d.* to 13*s.* 7*d.*; a major from 13*s.* 7*d.* to 16*s.*; lieutenant-colonel 18*s.*; colonel second commandant 20*s.*; and colonel commandant 38*s.* 6*d.* a day. The scheme of retirement is the same in both corps, but the half-pay is smaller in proportion in the infantry, in ratio with the pay.

The limits of a magazine article necessitate the curtailment of some of the minor particulars respecting pensions and allowances, subjects of examination and so on, but we have given sufficient information to show how the Royal Navy stands as a profession, what it will probably cost, and what it holds out as a reward in old age. Should any readers desire to obtain further details they may do so by applying to the Civil Service Commissioners, Burlington Gardens, with reference to examinations, and to the Under-Secretary of the Admiralty, Whitehall, for technical particulars. The latest information respecting the entry of officers and any alteration in qualifications will always be found in the quarterly 'Navy List,' published at 3*s.* by Eyre & Spottiswoode, East Harding Street, E.C.

MARTIN TUPPER.¹

LORD BEACONSFIELD once pronounced Charles Greville (of the 'Greville Memoirs') the most conceited man of his acquaintance—adding, for the sake of emphasis, that he had read Cicero and known Bulwer Lytton. There is, of course, a subtle difference between vanity and conceit; otherwise Lord Beaconsfield could not have overlooked two humbler contemporaries of his own and Greville's—Samuel Warren, author of 'Ten Thousand a Year,' and Martin Tupper, the subject of this sketch. Warren, it is true, was a man of real ability, although his merits are not specially apparent in his best-known work; Tupper's claim to immortality rests on his vanity alone. No man ever thought as well of himself with scantier reasons for so doing; no man ever soiled more paper in telling the world why it ought to admire him. And the curious thing is that the world took him at his own valuation; few books commanded a larger sale than Martin's during the middle years of the nineteenth century. How this popularity was gained the following extracts from his writings may explain—I have been obliged to make them very numerous, because the matter of his thought is too weak and watery for second-hand discussion; it is his style alone that makes him great.

He was born in London on July 17, 1810, being the eldest son of Dr. Martin Tupper, an eminent physician, who twice refused a baronetcy. This honourable lineage, however, was not romantic enough for our poet; he wasted much time in trying to prove his descent from 'the von Topheres, Chieftains or head-lords of Treffurth in Thuringia, as recorded in the heraldic MSS. of the British Museum.' On the other hand, he was equally anxious to show that 'Mr. Galton's topic of hereditary talent' counted for nothing in the formation of his genius. Neither Dr. Tupper nor his wife is allowed any literary endowments; their son derived his poetical powers straight from the Source whence Burns derived his patent of nobility.

God has sealed to me a blessed lot,
That pleasant heritage, the hearts of men,

he sings in one of his modest effusions.

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His schooldays were spent at Charterhouse under Dr. Russell, an Orbilius even more terrible than Keate. But one suspects Martin of some small poetical licence when he says that eighteen cuts with three birches was the usual punishment for a false quantity or 'a slip in those awkward verbs in μ .' Anyhow, his laments are long and bitter, especially over a nervous trick of stammering learnt in Russell's class-room; he said it made him feel 'a very wilderness of widowed thought' in the drawing-room of his friends. Happily no such bereavement extended to his all too facile pen.

From Charterhouse he went up to Christ Church in the same year as Mr. Gladstone. There he was as soundly snubbed by Dean Gaisford as he had previously been scourged by Dr. Russell; for the Dean was also great on verbs in μ , so great that the one University sermon he ever preached was devoted to an exposition of their usefulness. Extensive classical attainments—the Very Reverend scholar explained from the pulpit—not only enable us to look down with becoming contempt on those who have not received similar educational advantages, but lead to places of high honour and emolument in the Established Church of this world—and, we may humbly trust, in the World Above. Alas! our Martin was not the man to profit by such exhortations. A Pass degree was all that he could manage; and his only intellectual triumph at Oxford was winning a Divinity Prize Essay over Mr. Gladstone's head. He considers, however, that he once ran second for the Newdigate Prize Poem.

Soon after leaving Oxford he married, and settled down at Albury, near Guildford. It is unnecessary to state his occupation. Like Milton, he had been convinced from boyhood up of his vocation as a poet; though he differed from the author of 'Paradise Lost' in holding that their common art required no kind of literary apprenticeship. Indeed, nothing made him more angry than the suggestion that the Art of Poetry requires conscious intellectual effort. He was always denouncing Horace's 'carnal conceit' that verses tossed off in the flush of genius are bettered by subsequent pruning and correction. One of the longest of his earlier poems—it consists of about nine hundred lines—was written in something over a week. Whereupon 'divers dull Zoili' took advantage of this 'innocent fact' to be nasty in the reviews. Martin had them at his mercy. 'These things,' he said, 'are done at a heat, as every poet knows. Pegasus is a

racer not a cart-horse. Euterpe trips it like the hare, while dogged criticism is the tortoise.' His whole philosophy of composition is contained in the sonnet:

Into the buoyant air I leap
 Confident and exulting, at a bound
 Swifter than whirlwinds happily to sweep
 On fiery wings the reeling world around.
 Off with my fetters—who shall hold me back?—
 My path lies *there*.

With such a literary creed it is not surprising that his output was enormous, and that the most difficult of metres was his favourite; more than four hundred sonnets flowed from his pen. They treat of every kind of subject, though perhaps (as became a very loyal poet) the births and marriages of princes have a slight preponderance. But most of the characters in the Old Testament, nearly all the virtues and vices, Demosthenes and Army Purchase, Confucius and Ascot Races, the Venerable Bede and Samuel Rogers are similarly honoured. One of the most thunderous is addressed to an aching tooth, which he compares to

A stalk of fever on a root of pain,
 A red-hot coal, a dull sore cork by turns.

How the cork comes in I do not understand; nor why Sir Robert Peel's retirement on the Bedchamber Question of 1839 (though undoubtedly important in our constitutional history) should give rise to such strong language as the following—

The loathing realm
 At length has burst its chain: a motley few,
 The pseudo-saint, the boasting infidel,
 The demagogue and courtier, hand in hand,
 No more besiege our Zion's citadel.

But Martin did not measure his words. He wrote with equal emphasis on everything, and wrote wherever he went. One long poem of eighteen stanzas matured while he was supposed to be performing the exercises for the D.C.L. degree at Oxford; another is advertised as 'composed in the saddle, and written down in the crown of my hat.' Not even sea-sickness checked his Muse; she was never more active than during his trips across the Atlantic. It would be unfair to say that he wrote for the mere pleasure of writing, for Martin definitely rejected the gospel of Art for Art's sake. Like Wordsworth, he wished to be considered either as a teacher or as nothing; he is always patting himself on the back

for being 'so courageously moral and religious.' But he suffered from a kind of hysterical garrulity more often found among young ladies—the sort of young ladies who keep a diary, or indulge in the perilous delights of spiritual Direction. He was so absorbingly interested in himself that he could not talk of anything else, and must be always talking about it; and since other listeners were not always forthcoming, he preferred to talk to himself about himself on paper rather than not to talk at all. That he talked in metre is only an accident, due to the fact that he found verse 'almost—well, not quite easier than prose.' He has explained the matter himself in an eloquent passage, which I do not apologise for quoting at length, because an author has transcribed it into his autobiography as a specially favourable specimen of his prose style.

'An author's mind—and remember always, friend, that I speak in character, so judge not as egotistic vanity the well-playing of my rôle—such a mind is not a sheet of smooth wax, but a magic stone indented with fluttering inscriptions—no earthly tenement, but a barn stored to bursting—it is a painful pressure, constraining to write for comfort's sake—an appetite craving to be satisfied, as well as a power to be exerted—an impetus that longs to get away, rather than a dormant dynamic—thrice have I (let me confess it) poured forth the alleviating volume as an author, a real author, real, because, for very peace of mind, involuntary—but still the vessel fills—still the indigenous crop springs up, choking a better harvest, seeds of foreign growth, still these Lernaean necks sprout again, claiming with many mouths to explain, amuse, suggest, and controvert, to publish invention and to proscribe error. Truly it were enviable to be less apprehensive, less retentive—to be fitted with a colander-like mind, like that penal cask which forty-nine Danaïdes might not keep from leaking; to be, sometimes at least, suffered for a holiday to ramble brainless in the paradise of fools.' . . . Alas! it was not to be. 'The extortionate exacting armies of the ideal and the causal persecute my spirit, and I would make a patriot stand at once to vanquish the invaders of my peace. I write these things only to be quit of them, and not to let the crowd increase—I have conceived a plan to destroy them all, as Jehu and Elijah among the priests of Baal; I feel Malthusian among my mental nurslings. I will exhibit them in their state chaotic—I will addle the eggs, and the chickens shall not chirp—I will reveal, and the secrets shall not waste me: I will write, and thoughts shall not batten upon me.'

Goethe, it will be remembered, had suffered from a similar disease, and found relief in cultivating a healthy objectivity of mind. But 'objectivity' of any sort was not for Martin; he could not even take the first step thereto by learning to see himself as others saw him. Most young authors, whether they like it or no, are taught this accomplishment by their critics; but Martin thought the very smallest beer of his reviewers, unless indeed

The rill
Their dewy page did graciously instil

was an outrageous puff of himself and his wares. I hasten to mention, for the honour of the English Press, that nearly all these dewy pages hailed from the United States. On this side of the Atlantic reviewers erred, if they erred at all, in the opposite direction; the punishment they meted out to Martin was not so much reformatory as deterrent. Not that it much mattered what they did; our poet was as 'irreformable' as any *ex cathedrâ* decision of his enemy, the Pope. When the 'Saturday' observed that if Mr. Tupper fails to make himself heard, the fault will be rather in the public than in him, Martin only promised to

Greet the white-lipped sneerer's gall
With a kind, forgiving kiss.

When Mr. Alaric Watts 'described my readers as idiots, and myself as a bell-man,' Martin's thoughts turned to 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,' to the martyrdom of Keats and Southey, Wordsworth and Coleridge. His sympathy with the last-named went so far that he wrote a continuation of the first part of 'Christabel.' It begins:

The gibbous moon, all chilling and wan,
Like a sleepless eyeball looketh on.

But he was not in the least abashed when he discovered that Coleridge had preferred to finish 'Christabel' himself. At once he set to work on a new 'Tintern Abbey,' in the hope of correcting the popish tendencies of Wordsworth's over-rated poem.

Of course none of his detractors escaped without their sonnet; even the Quarterlies are thus addressed:

Make haste, make haste, my prudent little friend!
You lag behind the world, both blind and halt.
For your own credit leave off finding fault
And wisely bustle up to make amends.

Look you! time was when even such small salt
 As your encouragement and speaking fair
 Would have been prized and grateful; savouring well
 The taste of bitterness, the touch of care,
 The proud young spirit felt, but scorned to tell,
 When, keenly sensitive of man's despite,
 While conscious that from kinder Heaven above
 A gift had been vouchsafed of purest light,
 That spirit coveted your looks of love
 And yearned around, and ye refused his Right.

Jeffrey, casting looks of love on Martin in the 'Edinburgh,' would certainly have been a sight worth seeing.

The strife with the reviewers waxed hottest over Martin's best known work, 'Proverbial Philosophy,' of which more than a million copies were sold in America, and about a quarter that number in the United Kingdom; for a long while the English copyrights alone brought in at least 500*l.* a year. 'For two generations,' says the author, 'it has been a common gift-book for weddings, and has more than once appeared among the gifts at royal marriages; hence it is small wonder that I have often been greeted by old—and young—married couples as having been a sort of spiritual Cupid on such occasions. Frequently ladies hitherto unknown to me have claimed me as their unseen friend, and some have feelingly acknowledged that my "Love and Marriage" were the turning-points of their lives and causes of their happiness.' Nevertheless, I do not propose to trouble the reader with many extracts from the book; its character is best gauged from the two great parodies—Calverley's in 'Fly Leaves,' and Lewis Carroll's in the 'Christ Church Belfry.' It jolts along through the common circumstances of life like a country tradesman's springless cart; and its teachings are perfectly adapted to that tradesman's mind—always rancidly respectable and despicably sane. It does, in fact, for the lower middle class what Kingsley's worst poems—I mean poems of the 'Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever' type—do for the uneducated rich; both writers tell their public—in language somewhat more ornate than that public could itself command—the kind of thing it likes to think it thought. Kingsley, it is true, never lost the self-restraint of a gentleman, but Martin's unbridled lust for the commonplace drives him into truly indecent exposures of the frailty of the human mind. Indeed, 'Proverbial Philosophy' would stand on the same line as Mr. Burnand's 'Happy Thoughts,' were

not the first written in deadly earnest, the second as a cruel joke. Both are made up of the same little idiotic reflections—reflections as to the weather, or the fit of one's boots, or whether it is time to have one's hair cut—from which no one can protect himself, though every reputable intellect is ashamed of having entertained them. But Martin deliberately takes his place at the scullery-sink of literature, whence he serves us up such greasy, tepid messes as the following:

How often forgeries and frauds are tempted and contrived
To satisfy appearances, and pay the tax of vanity.
Even in rural cottages the sacrifice is offered
Where humble labourers slink ashamed before their flaunting daughters,
Whose silly finery is bought haply through household theft,
And anyway their mother's needs had better seen their wages.

So pitifully stale was the best of this morality that even admirers began to ask whether it had not seen service before, and Martin was obliged to defend himself from the charge of plagiarism. He was accused of having stolen from the 'Gulistan' of Saadi, from Dodsley's 'Economy of Human Life,' and even from the 'Wits' Commonwealth' of 1667. The charge was all the more ungrateful, since the 'Brooklyn Eagle' had already hailed our philosopher as one of the rare men of his age: 'he turned up thoughts as with a plough, on the sward of monotonous usage.' But Martin was not in the least surprised. He had always looked on critics as a race of malignant liars: they had found Milton guilty of pilfering from Cædmon, Bunyan of borrowing from the Bohemian scholar whom all good Slavophiles call Koménski. He was rejoiced to sin in such good company. Besides, as he very sensibly observed, 'When authors write on the same subjects, and with much the same stock of words and ideas, collisions of thought and language are very apt to occur.' And, indeed, the balder commonplaces of one age and tongue are amazingly like the balder commonplaces of another.

But it is unfair to judge our author only on his 'Proverbial Philosophy.' There is plenty of sound, if undistinguished, sense in his philanthropic ballads and pamphlets. Martin was an honest Philistine enough, whenever he forgot to pose as a great poet; in presence of the Infinite he is only a driveller, but confront him with a tangible grievance, and the drivel at once dries up on his lips. In his small way he did good service as a social reformer, and that in quarters where one would not have expected

to find a moralist usually so conventional. He was a very strong supporter of the new Divorce Laws, an unflinching enemy of the tyrannous Blue Ribbon. His once famous ballad of 'Ellen Gray' (the story of an 'unfortunate' done to death in a workhouse) was quite as vigorous and quite as effective an attack on Bumble as anything in 'Oliver Twist.' He was a good friend to the Volunteer movement in its early, struggling days: nearly all his poems on the subject are up to the level of 'Riflemen, form!' 'Ho! Brother Jonathan, I'm a Britisher,' is said to have allayed the anti-English prejudices of many a Transatlantic breast; and even his 'Anti-Xurion,' an invective against the odiously unphysiological habit of shaving, was not more absurd than the crusade against Harris Tweeds, or other recent vagaries of the 'Lancet.'

But it is on the ecclesiastical field that Englishmen of Martin's type find the fullest scope for their eccentricities, and on to this field I must follow him, though to do so is to challenge comparison with Mr. James Britten's inimitable 'Protestant Fiction.' Martin was an anti-clerical of the true British breed; like Mr. Carvell Williams, or the Squirradical of Stevenson's 'Wrong Box,' he combined the sincerest reverence for religion with the sincerest detestation of its authorised ministers. The Black Brigade was at the bottom of every mischief—

Ay! all ye Druids, ye Brahmins, ye Pagans,
And African Obis and Priests of all creeds,
From Mary's the Blest to Astarte and Dagon's,
Through priestcraft in chief poor humanity bleeds.
Not the dull laymen but scholarly churchmen,
These were the burners for bigotry's sake;
Search out all history—Protestants, search, men!
You'll still find the priest at the root of the stake.

The position of the priest is peculiar, and suggests the ancient way of dealing with a vampire or a *felo de se*. But even worse than the surplice were the lawn sleeves; Martin was one of the first practitioners of that curious art of bishop-baiting, which since has had attractions for so many orders of minds, from Matthew Arnold to Sir William Harcourt, from Sir William Harcourt to the Ritualistic Press, and seems now to have taken its recognised place among our manlier English sports. There was not a consecration in Westminster Abbey but called forth some scathing invective against—

Bishops in dignified greatness
 Laying hands on more bishops, forsooth !
 So careful by lordly sedateness
 To compromise nothing but truth.

While for the delectation of more especial enemies, such as Samuel of Oxford and Henry of Exeter, Martin sketches the portrait of the ideal Prelate of the Primitive Church—

Not for mere learning void of grace,
 Nor tutoring a Duke,
 Nor by hot canvass in high place
 His bishopric he took.
 Electioneering pamphleteers,
 And bold debating men,
 And smooth-tongued speakers for the Peers,
 Were never bishops then.

But there were lower circles still in Martin's Inferno. His Malebolge was tenanted by what Evangelicals love to call the three black R's—Rationalism, Ritualism, and Romanism. On the first his utterances are not impressive; they scarcely get beyond the rather wild hypothesis that faithful preaching of hell-fire would stop the mouth of Professor Huxley. And Martin's proposed remedy appears all the stranger, because in the case of ordinary sinners he was a believer in Eternal Hope. Perhaps he thought (like the lady in Mr. Mallock's 'New Paul and Virginia') that hell was chiefly intended for those who doubted its existence.

His prejudice against the other two R's he deliberately cultivated to the point of mania. By nature he was tolerant enough, and indeed writes excellent sense about 'watching time's stream to see the bubbles (of Mormonism and the Peculiar People) sink.' But Ritualism and Roman Catholicism were both beyond the pale of his charity. He knew too much of the priests and their methods.

Infect the children! that's the golden rule.
 Encourage Sunday cricket after church
 And let them leave the sermon in the lurch.
 Catch every mother, as you can, with tea.
 The father—ah! a hopeless case is he—
 Let him die out.

He was disgusted by the rococo mediævalism of the Oxford Movement. Witness his reception of 'Hymns Ancient and Modern.'

Hymns? Your sensational 'modern and olden,'
 Praising some virgin or angel or saint,
 And sentimental 'Jerusalem the Golden,'
 Just such an Eden some Pasha might paint,

With the 'dear country' so little ethereal
 Odin is heard in its songs and its feasts,
 While even Islam is scarce more material
 As to the Paradise pleasure of priests.

He was learned also in the Abélard and Héloïse side of Ritualism—in what Sir James Stephen calls 'the hieropathic affection, of which the female bosom is the seat and the ministers of religion the objects'—

Flirts of the chancel! ye milliner priests,
 Decked in your laces and satin-bound hems,
 Bringing back Baal's idolatrous feasts,
 Bowings and music and flowers and gems—
 Firework devices and trumpery wreaths,
 Magical crosses and colour-bright scrolls;
 Each emblem, each symbol, some pestilence breathes,
 Against the health-spirit of rational souls.

But Martin was far too good a psychologist to suppose that 'arsenic'd sweetmeats of Jesuit invention' were the only bait used by the Church of Rome. He saw how it adapts itself to every type of character; indeed, his summing up of its attractions reminds one of the famous passage in the 'Conférences d'Angleterre,' which begins: 'L'Église catholique est une femme: défiez-vous des paroles charmeresses de son agonie.'

There are gauds for the foolish in chaunts and in tints,
 There are mystical saws for the wise!
 For the sensual, confession with pardon and hints,
 For the ignorant, miracle-lies.
 All strong concentration of power and of plan,
 With spies and unscrupulous tricks,
 To trap or to snare or inveigle the man,
 In a bird-lime that stuns as it sticks.
 Ay! *stuns as it sticks*, for your bird-lime is made
 Of misletoe, holly and yew,
 And priestcraft in Popery's poisonous shade
 Entraps as the gamekeepers do.

I have inquired in vain of several gamekeepers as to any analogue in nature to this spiritual bird-lime. The poet's metaphors seem to be a little mixed; but there is no misunderstanding them in the following passage—at least when one has realised that the Italian ferret is Pius IX., whose family name was Ferretti.

For Britain frowns and hectors
 In honest wrath to know
 So many budding rectors
 Perverted to the foe,

And vows she will not stand it,
To see the parish-priest
A semi-papal bandit
To the Babylonish beast.

Shall that Italian ferret
Usurp this lion-throne
Which Protestants inherit
Through their pure faith alone ?
Shall Popery and its vermin,
As bad old times have seen,
Once more infest the ermine
Of England and its Queen ?

The same spirit of lordly condemnation is carried by our author into politics. Neither Conservatives nor Liberals had the honour of his allegiance ; both parties were too like the bishops, in that they tried

By ostrich blinks
And salves and soft excuse
While evil in the nostrils stinks,
To stop up each abuse ;

and both, in consequence, fell under the equal lash of his censure. With Mr. Gladstone, however, as an Oxford contemporary, he long remained on friendly terms. The statesman (having learnt to know his master in the contest for the Oxford Divinity prize) received ' both modestly and gratefully ' whatever Martin had to tell him ; but the new Mentor's watchfulness was never cheated by his *Télémaque's* docility. On the first hint of disagreement between them, Martin wrote his ' well-known palinode '—

Beware of mere delusive eloquence.

and this was followed by ' a still more caustic lyric,' beginning

Glozing tongue, that none can trust.

But the final blow of severance was struck over the disestablishment of the Irish Church. In the course of some researches into unfulfilled Prophecy Martin discovered that the Greek numerals γ', λ', α', δ', σ', τ', ο', ν', ε', added together, made 666, the mystical number of the Papacy and of the Apocalyptic Beast !

This scorn for mere political leaders kept Martin out of the good things those leaders have to give away. It is true that he was admitted an F.R.S., on the recommendation of Lord Melbourne (who had been his father's patient) ; and the fact of his election has often been made a stick to beat the Royal Society. This is unjust. He was elected as quite a young man, and simply out of compliment to his father's services to medicine. Of course, he took no part in the Society's transactions, beyond

once or twice protesting against the election of vivisectionists. One cannot but admire his courage.

The only honour he coveted was a peerage, but it never came his way. The old gentleman's heart beat fast when his ex-disciple, Gladstone, raised Alfred Tennyson to the Upper House. Nevertheless, he made up his mind to refuse the dignity, even before it was offered. He could not have afforded to live up to his rank in the way required by 'our Mammonite age and clime.' Indeed, the whole later period of his life was overclouded by financial troubles. He had never been a good economist, and in the matter of investments no widow or orphan was more gullible. Through the collapse of one bubble company alone he lost the savings of twenty years. Thereafter 'bursting barns and inflated money-bags' were not for him. In 1873 he was glad to accept a pension from the Civil List. He made gallant attempts to retrieve his fortunes, but in vain. His popularity had begun to wane, and the suburbs were crying out for stronger drink than the poor old man's milk and water. Before he died, in 1889, the star of 'Proverbial Philosophy' had finally set before the sun of a Sorrowing Satan.

One cannot pretend to regret his disappearance from the roll of fame. Martin the man was a harmless, worthy creature, who could not willingly have hurt a fly; the very existence of Martin the poet was a daily outrage on human reason. No man of his time did more than he to bring both morality and literature into contempt. His exhortations and proverbs are as far from supplying sound rules of conduct as his artistic qualities are far from genuine art. Vulgar Philistine self-righteousness was his watch-word, flunkeyism and sectarian hatred his stock-in-trade. He had aspired to set to music the best thoughts of the people, but it is only their dingier prejudices find their way into his rhymes. That he should ever have been popular—that anyone, even an American, should have read 'Proverbial Philosophy' sixty times—might well drive Matthew Arnold to despair. And now that Matthew Arnold is gone matters have changed from bad to worse. Martin, at any rate, only won celebrity after desperate battles with his critics; but his successors of the present day do not even need to fight. The more serious literary criticism becomes, the more is it treated as a negligible quantity—the more the general reader returns to his Emma Jane Worboise, and the middle classes to their Lady Fanny Flummery in the mire.

ST. CYRES.

THE SALAMANDER OF TOQUÉVILLE.¹

IF the restaurant of the 'Russian Rabbit' had not been burnt down Toquéville would never have dreamed of wanting a fire-engine. The 'Russian Rabbit' was amply insured in the 'Company of the Good Brothers and Associated Sons of the Fatherland.' But when its late proprietor, the estimable Duboc, tried to collect the insurance money, he was met with a denial of liability and the suggestion that he had himself burnt his 'Russian Rabbit' for his own purposes.

Now all Toquéville knew that this was not so. All Toquéville—some two hundred persons—had been present at the fire, which took place in the off-season, and had seen the fragments of Duboc's bank-notes, burnt black and unnegotiable, lying in his fire-distorted safe! Was not that sufficient to exonerate Duboc, even had he not been so estimable as he was?

The groundless accusation brought by the 'Good Brothers and Associated Sons of the Fatherland' against the estimable Duboc threw considerable disrepute on all insurance offices, in the opinion of the unprogressive inhabitants of Toquéville. But when it was discovered that the 'Good Brothers, &c.,' were actually insolvent, public opinion in Toquéville was thoroughly aroused. Public opinion expressed itself in well-chosen words on the subject of insurance offices that were bankrupt and made horrible insinuations against respectable citizens like Duboc.

The words were exceptionally well chosen, as befitted an occasion of importance in the stagnant life of Toquéville. (If there is one thing on which its citizens pride themselves, it is the successful choosing of their words. A man in Toquéville is judged not so much by the friends as by the words that he chooses.)

In sympathising with Duboc everyone did his best, and it is doubtful whether in the whole short history of the little seaside place so many admirable and fitting words were spoken.

Here the matter might have rested, as was the custom with matters in Toquéville—they were thoroughly discussed for a short time and then they rested for ever—but for the widow Bachot.

¹ Copyright 1902 by Frank Richardson in the United States of America.

She owned the finest shop in all the town, 'Aux Fantaisies.' Her motto was 'Luxury and Utility.' Her business was the sale of fancy goods, and of these the most important she designed herself. Madame Bachot had more taste than has ever fallen to the lot of any other woman. Unfortunately, all of it was bad. Numbers of people have, of course, a certain amount of bad taste. But no one person has ever had so much of it as Madame Bachot.

And she brought her bad taste up to date in a manner that was astounding. She invented a camp-stool, embroidered with a head of Petronius Arbiter, and called it the 'Quo Vadis' (suitable for the beach). A large violent-coloured cretonne bag, with one pocket for a novel and another for black spectacles, she irrelevantly christened 'Le Gustave Zédé.' Many similar things did she design and actually execute. It was apparently her object to create an impossible want, and fill it with an incredible supply. (Miniature monstrosities in the form of wardrobes made of shell-work and purple plush belonged to the period before her creative powers had thoroughly matured.)

In appearance, she was a benevolent old lady (with a noticeable tendency in the direction of whiskers), fat, cheery, and waddling, the last person in the world to whom one would have attributed her evil works, some of which recalled the worst examples of early-Victorian house deformation. It was, perhaps, their suggestion of familiar atrocities at home which procured a ready sale for her productions among the few English visitors who came over from Boulogne.

Early in April Madame Bachot, always in advance of the times, was having her head shampooed by her next-door neighbour, Letort, the barber, in preparation for the coming season. (The season at Toquéville begins in July.)

Hippolyte Letort was a fine figure of a man, and consequently he was an unusually masculine person for a hairdresser. He stood six feet high, had a florid waxen complexion, and wore the most magnificent yellow moustaches. And he wore them in a very striking way. Each moustache, on leaving the upper lip, curled completely round, dropped for an inch and a half, and then turned gracefully up again. This subtle device gave him something of the appearance of a cow with two crumpled horns. But as a set-off to these almost superhuman glories he was bald as an egg. Why Hippolyte had never married was the only subject in the universe on which a Toquévillois could not give a decided and

eloquent opinion. There was no marriageable girl in the little town who would not gladly have become the mistress of the Villa Hippolyte, even if the moustaches had not gone with it. The Villa Hippolyte formed one-half of a detached wooden building in the Rue de Paris, the main street of Toquéville. The other half was the beautiful 'Aux Fantaisies.'

While the barber gracefully shampooed the spare black locks of Madame Bachot he spoke eloquently of local affairs. There are few situations in which a really manly man appears relatively to better advantage than when he is shampooing the head of the woman he loves.

Hippolyte loved Marie-Eugénie, and as he looked in the glass and compared her appearance with his own he almost told his love. The seaweed-like hair hung over her puffy face, and something within him whispered that, much as he loved her, she was far less beautiful than he.

The advantage of personal appearance was all on his side. Physically, too, the woman's head was in the hollow of his hands.

Then why did he not tell his love? Was it because Madame Bachot looked so horrible with her dank black hair hanging like straggling serpents, dying on the dreary desert of her face? Did he adduce from the fact that the widow abandoned herself to his ministrations without any restraint of coquetry that she could never regard him as a suitor? Did he understand that no woman can dream of loving a man who has seen her at her worst? Madame Bachot's best was not attractive; but her worst——!

Her worst was incredible.

Letort saw it, and—loved it.

He did not know that it was her worst. To him it was a phase of Madame Bachot—that was all.

But he did not tell his love because—it must be said—he was a coward.

Big man though he was, and the wearer of big moustaches, Hippolyte was not really brave.

So, though Madame Bachot's wet eyes, like plovers' eggs, blinked up at the looking-glass as he pulled her lumpy head about, pressing her scalp with his fingers, his lips did not utter the tale of his love.

Yet he was not altogether a coward. As a hairdresser he was heroic. Though every instinct in his artistic soul revolted at the gross texture of Madame Bachot's hair, he could summon up, on

occasions, professional pluck to compliment her on some non-existent merit.

There were in Hippolyte two personalities—the heroic hairdresser and the lily-livered lover.

‘Be a man,’ said Letort (the man). ‘Marry to please yourself.’

‘Be an artist,’ said Letort (the barber). ‘Have nothing to do with her. It is an impossible head of hair.’

‘Further,’ said Letort the lover, to spur him on, ‘think twice. She is a great creative artist. What are you—eh? Only a barber. She is romantic; she will mock herself of you. If you were a romantic figure, it might be different.’

‘Think three times,’ added Letort the hairdresser. ‘If she refuses you, as she will, all the women in Toquéville will know that you have proposed marriage and been mocked. They will be jealous, and if jealous they will not want to be shampooed by you. What a head of hair for a brilliant barber’s wife!’

Hesitating between the two voices, Letort the spokesman never mentioned the matter of his heart’s desire. Instead of telling his love and taking his chance, he continued to chat of general topics.

‘What, Madame Bachot, is, in your opinion, the main requirement of Toquéville?’

Said Madame Bachot, whose thin black hair was hanging dankly over her pale yellow face: ‘The telephone to Boulogne, Monsieur Letort.’

‘By no means.’

‘More English visitors.’

‘They will be attracted in time by the beautiful novelties of Madame Bachot.’

‘What then, Monsieur Letort?’

‘A fire-engine.’

‘A fire-engine?’

‘Certainly; a fire-engine. (Your hair astounds me by its magnificent luxuriance more and more every year that I have the privilege of shampooing it, Madame Bachot.) But consider for one moment the dangers that we run from fire. Do not forget the sinister experience of our poor Duboc. At the same time I beg you to bear in mind that if, by chance, the “Fantaisies” were burnt down, the loss would be irreparable, not only to Toquéville, but also to France.’

‘Oh, Monsieur Letort, you are too amiable.’

‘By no means, Madame Bachot; and there is not the least reason for saying so. Figure to yourself that if your artistic creations were destroyed, they could be replaced, provided you yourself were not destroyed. But should you fall a victim to the flames,’ said Letort, choosing his words very carefully, ‘who could replace you, Madame Bachot? Ask yourself that, Madame Bachot.’

‘There is a great deal in what you say. But what would a fire-engine cost? Remember that the syndicate of landlords in Toquéville is not rich—honourable, but not rich.’

‘It could not be got for less than a thousand francs.’

‘That is a great deal of money.’

‘Not for a good fire-engine,’ said Monsieur Letort, whose uncle at Amiens, from whom he has expectations, was in the fire-engine business. This fact he did not see fit to mention, but he continued, ‘What is the cost of a fire-engine to Toquéville—subscribed for by our three hundred owners of houses—when compared with the possible loss of your fanciful novelties to France?’

‘There is reason in what you say, Monsieur Letort.’

‘There would be conviction in what I say if it were repeated by Madame Bachot, the inventor of countless beautiful devices, as originating in her fertile brain,’ said Letort, choosing as good words as he had ever selected in his life.

‘You say the most beautiful things, Monsieur Letort.’

‘They will sound more beautiful from the lips of Madame Bachot.’ He did not mention the incipient moustache that formed a ragged eyebrow over the upper of the lips so gracefully alluded to. He went on:

‘I speak rather in your interests than in my own, dear Madame. Myself, I am insured for 5,000 francs in an English company of undoubted stability. If my shop were burnt down I should not be the loser. What is my stock-in-trade? My art—myself. The day after the fire I practise my profession anywhere, in the street if you will. I am no more dependent on my shop than a great painter is on his studio; he can move to another at a moment’s notice. In the event of fire I collect the insurance money and fit up a magnificent shop, and employ an assistant even. How differently, dear Madame, are you placed with your shop. You are like a snail in a shell. Burn the shell, and where is the snail? Pardon the comparison! It is not well chosen. My devotion is my excuse.’

'Dear Monsieur Letort, you have spoken well.'

The barber had sown the seed.

Madame Bachot caused it to fructify.

Within a week all Toquéville was agog on the subject of the imperative necessity of a fire-engine. For a month the matter was thoroughly discussed in all its bearings.

Six weeks later Letort was leisurely shaving Antoine, the negro croupier of the Casino, when Monsieur Henri Dachicourt entered the shop.

Fat, prosperous, and singularly select in speech, he was the president of the syndicate of landlords which mismanaged the affairs of Toquéville. The double chins at the back of his neck heaved with emotion. The little black eyes like boot buttons sparkled with local patriotism as he said these words :

'Monsieur Letort, on behalf of the syndicate of proprietors of our beloved Toquéville, I have the honour of making to you a proposition, glorious alike to the devoted minds that conceived it, to myself, the unworthy but loyal mouthpiece of these amiable souls, and also to you, Monsieur Letort, the recipient of the proposition. In a word, the syndicate has conferred on you the honourable function of forming a commission to collect the sum of 1,000 francs for the purchase of a fire-engine to combat those destructive flames that might seek to devastate our beloved watering-place. The tears which are welling to my eyes at the thought of so sinister an event prove that I allude to our Toquéville.'

Antoine, whose shining black face was half covered with waves of creamy lather, beat his feet on the floor in approval of Monsieur Dachicourt's remarks. Letort found no words worth the choosing. With tears in his eyes he clasped the president by both his hands.

Through the red blinds the sunshine fell pink on the floor of the shop.

Silently these two kissed.

Antoine shed tears.

The other men looked questioningly at one another for a second. But the broadness of their minds, the strength of their local patriotism, prevailed over prejudices of race and over the lather on the African negro's face.

Silently they kissed Antoine. But he, with that modesty and knowledge of the fitness of things that made the coloured croupier so popular in Toquéville, did not dream of kissing them in return.

It was an important enough day for Toquéville, but it was an epoch in the life of Antoine.

Letort set about this business of the commission, and Toquéville responded lavishly to his importunity. In the height of the season a concert was given in the little wooden casino of the Grand Hotel for the benefit of the fire-engine fund.

The few English visitors who took *apéritifs* in public places were trapped by Letort into a benevolence, the object of which they but imperfectly understood.

By the end of September the indefatigable barber had raised the sum of 1,430 francs!

Toquéville spent the winter in the choicest conversation. It patted itself on the back for the wonderful enterprise which it had shown in guarding itself against total destruction. In December the little village is deserted, except by a few of the principal inhabitants. The chalets, that in the summer look so bright and echo with the laughter of countless water-babies with legs brown as meerschauum pipe-stems, are closed. The empty streets look like a sweet Auburn in a doll's-house world. But in the few occupied villas there were proud hearts that winter, the hearts of good citizens who were to have a fire-engine of their own. Already three factions had been formed—irreconcilable parties—on the subject of the most suitable name for the fire-engine that was to be bought.

But even now an important step had been taken. The trumpet had been chosen—a fine brass trumpet that, on the first alarm of fire, should summon the brigade to their perilous toil. Further, it had been properly engraved: 'To the heroic life-savers of Toquéville.'

Think of it! Not a life had yet been saved, not a life had yet been imperilled; but these honest villagers knew in their hearts that when the day of danger came, when the trumpet sounded the alarm, their lives would be saved with a heroism worthy of Toquéville. For them the trumpet had already sounded many a time, and many a score of lives had been rescued from the flames. Unhappily, no one could play the trumpet. But the public spirit of the village was such that each of the inhabitants volunteered to learn it.

The glory of sounding an alarm, of rushing at intense speed along the streets at dead of night, of blowing martial strains while the noble life-savers of the place were doing memorable deeds,

appealed to each brave heart. Canivet, the photographic artist, could play the oboe (indifferently). He said that he would gladly devote his entire life to learning the trumpet. Timmermans, the Alsatian chemist (no mean performer on the concertina), urged his claims. It was argued by Matifat, the pork butcher, that as he was an expert 'cellist he was the Heaven-appointed raiser of alarms. Several persons who had never been suspected of playing any instrument at all pressed this very fact as an argument in favour of their claims. A slight knowledge of the 'cello, the oboe, and the concertina, said they, would be liable to embarrass and to confuse a citizen who, in the stillness of the night, was suddenly called upon to call upon others to fight the flames.

As to the appointment of a trumpeter there were no less than eight parties in the village by the time that winter was slipping into spring.

For the honour of Toquéville it is well to pass over the meeting that was held in the Café of Progress to decide the matter. Hard and ill-chosen words were spoken—words that were afterwards forgotten and then apologised for, and then, being recalled, were restated and apologised for again.

But the gist of each speaker's initial speech was this:

'Gentlemen, and dear fellow-citizens,—If I, Timmermans, Matifat, Canivet (as the case might be), am willing to devote such time as I can spare from my honourable profession of chemist, pork butcher, photographic artist (or whatever his business was), to learn the art of trumpet-blowing, to summon our devoted fire-brigade to risk their precious lives, that is enough. It suffices. All is said. If you spurn me, you spurn me! Can I say more? No. Duty and public spirit compel me, however, to point out to you that neither Timmermans, nor Matifat, nor Canivet (or whoever the speaker was not), has ever had any experience on the trumpet. Have we any guarantee that these gentlemen will ever succeed in learning that complicated and beautiful instrument? No. Whereas I who speak guarantee myself. Besides, I have yet to hear that a photographer, a druggist, a pig-killer (and persons interested in all other businesses that were not the speaker's), is a Heaven-born performer on the trumpet. Above all, let me urge you to remember that we are children of the Fourteenth of July! Mindful of that glorious date, let us act for the welfare of our beloved town, which will, of a surety, one day become a city, and cast aside all considerations of personal vanity,

such as that of Matifat, and Canivet, and Timmermans (as the case might be).'

After his third speech no one of the candidates wasted time in choosing his words. Every man said just what came into his head and threatened to withdraw his subscription. (Having arranged for such duels as were the natural sequence of his words, each orator left the Café of Progress with anger in his heart.)

Hippolyte Letort and Madame Bachot were left alone with some five or six of the less important landlords of Toquéville. Then the hairdresser did a courteous and a witty thing. In an admirably gallant and well-turned speech, full of historical allusions to *vivandières* and chivalrous observations on the part played by women in the life of France, he proposed that Madame Bachot, 'like an angel of victory, should sound the trumpet and summon the brave life-savers to their noble task.'

This witty suggestion put everybody in a good humour, and when Madame Bachot smilingly returned Monsieur Letort's compliment, and proposed that he should have the honour of sounding the trumpet, her proposition was carried with applause.

The business of the evening being concluded, the meeting dissolved. When Hippolyte and Madame Bachot were left alone the hairdresser did a beautiful and a symbolic thing. Though he was wearing his best black-and-white trousers (the ones with the sponge-bag design), he flung himself on his knees at the feet of Madame Bachot. He was no longer a barber—he was a man. He poured out his love in a torrent of beautiful words.

The lady expressed surprise. She had dreamed of no such thing!

What! Did his Marie-Eugénie imagine that her Hippolyte could live next door to her for all these years without desiring an even closer union?

'Oh, my dear Monsieur Letort!'

'Hippolyte to you, dear Madame! Ever your Hippolyte! Are you then blind, dear Marie-Eugénie? or do you think that I am blind to the charms of art? Could any man, not a worm, a pig-faced Englishman, a Dreyfusard, look at the admirable creations of "The Fantaisies" without adoring their creator? No, never! A thousand times, no!!'

'Raise yourself, Monsieur. You astound me! You take me by surprise! This is so sudden.'

'Sudden! Have I not given proof enough? Listen. Did

I ever make an allusion to what all other artists in my profession would call the surplus hair on your adorable face? Never! Did I suggest the use of my depilatory at five francs a bottle for your case? No. Why not? Because I loved you. Did you not suspect the motive of my silence on the subject? Love. I would not touch a hair of your—face. To me at least they are sacred.'

But even this proof of the triumph of love over commercial instincts in her suitor did not weigh with Marie-Eugénie.

'Pray raise yourself,' she repeated firmly.

He cried: 'You ask why I have not spoken before?'

She didn't; but that was merely a rhetorical question, and Hippolyte immediately answered it. 'I will tell you. You are an artist. You live in a world of dreams. From Parnassus itself you descend to place the creations of your splendid fancy on sale in Toquéville. You are romantic. Your world is the world of romance. Who was I that I should hope to enter those shadowy realms of yours? A barber. I was a mere barber till to-night. But now my position is changed. I am the trumpeter of our splendid fire-brigade. You must no longer think of me as a mere barber! Think of me rather sounding martial strains, urging our brave fellow-citizens to their noble work amidst the roaring flames and crashing timbers. Ah, you wince! Your sympathetic heart is trembling at the thought of danger to your Hippolyte. Be calm. For your sake I would not imperil my life—no, not for worlds. My post is not a post of danger. It is a post of glory. I summon our life-savers to their task, and then my duty ceases. I cannot risk my life, for my life is yours.'

'It is useless, my dear Monsieur. I am touched, deeply touched. But I shall never marry again. As you say, in words which I shall never forget, my life is my art—"The Fantaisies." If I should ever be tempted into wedlock—you will excuse me if I am candid—it would be for the sake of my art, it would be to extend "The Fantaisies." You cannot help me to enlarge it.'

With a sympathetic hand, and as though to soften the force of her refusal, she softly patted Hippolyte's bald head. But her tone was terribly grim.

'In a word, then, "The Fantaisies" is my rival,' he said, standing erect with his right arm outstretched.

'If you will have it so, dear Monsieur. You have no other,' she added with a beautiful smile.

He turned on his heel.

Muttering angrily, 'A bas les Fantaisies,' he strode from the room and out of the Café of Progress.

To the starry night he said, 'If my rival were a man he should certainly receive some revolver shots in his stomach.' As he was passing 'The Fantaisies,' he stopped for a second or two and peppered its artistic triumphs with balls from an imaginary pistol.

As there was nothing more to be done he went to bed.

The 15th of August is always a great day in Toquéville, for then the *fête* of the little town takes place, and greasy poles and bicycle races are the order of the day; dances and torchlight processions cause the disorder of the night.

There is a 'Society' ball at the Grand Hotel, and a 'popular' ball at the Hôtel des Dunes. But this year the 15th of August would be memorable beyond all other 15ths of August in the past or future history of the village, for it would witness the christening of the 'Salamander.'

After much ill-feeling, after interminable speeches, after incredible suggestions, the name of the fire-engine had been decided. Each important householder had, of course, wanted to call the engine after the name of his wife—Clotilde, Hortense, Adelaide, Philippine, and Rose-Marie.

So violent was opinion on this matter that a solution of the question seemed impossible, until it was discovered that seven of the wives of the proprietors possessed the name Marie, amongst others. Then, to save a revolution, the rest of the proprietors decided to call the engine 'Marie.' Immediately the seven heard of the decision they vetoed it, each insisting that if the machine were called after his wife the christening should be made definite beyond dispute: the surname should be added. The whole town revolted at such a suggestion. It was unfair that a fire-engine for which all had subscribed should be identified solely with the chemist under the name of 'Marie Timmermans'!

It would be equally absurd to call it 'Marie Matifat.' The fire-engine was a serious matter. It was not to be treated as a joke or an advertisement. However, all differences had eventually been sunk, all duels had been 'arranged,' and the engine was to be called by the usual name of fire-engines, the 'Salamander.'

It was a beautiful engine. It was, of course, painted red, white and blue, and with accessories—one axe, two harpoons, seventy-five linen buckets, twelve helmets, twelve brilliant belts,

twelve blue blouses, and the famous trumpet—it had cost 1,110 francs 95 centimes.

The balance of the 1,430 francs collected by Letort was to be spent on the festivities attending its christening. Everything pointed to a great day.

The 15th of August dawned bright, with a dead-blue sky and infinite promise of fine weather. Everyone was up early; everyone was happy; everyone was proud; and, of course, everyone was talking. At 6.30 A.M. in the Place de la République were assembled the twelve noble life-savers, wearing their shining helmets, their brilliant belts, and their blouses. By profession they were masons, but they were perfectly prepared to devote their spare time (for a small annual subsidy) to life-saving. They were grouped awkwardly around the beautiful 'Salamander.' Gallant fellows though they were, they seemed to be cowed by the elegance of the engine, and stood with folded hands, looking as dejected as convicts. The instructor from Boulogne explained the method of working the 'Salamander' in the event of a fire in a first-floor room, a fire in an attic, a fire in a swimming-bath, a fire on a church steeple, a fire in a crowded opera-house during the performance of 'Robert le Diable.' So beautifully chosen were his words that no one ventured to tell him that there was not a swimming-bath, a steeple, or an opera-house in Toquéville. The instructor charmed all hearers. He patted the masons on their clumsy shoulders, and called them 'brave fellows,' 'dauntless heroes,' 'hearts of adamant,' and pleasing things of the sort. He accomplished (verbally) extraordinary deeds of heroism for them. He spoke a selection of short speeches, such as would be suitable for Matifat, the honorary chief of the fire-brigade, to make to his devoted men after a fiery victory. 'Bravest of the brave,' he concluded, 'I have told you how to manipulate your glorious "Salamander." Woe betide the flames that raise their death-dealing hands before the fire-brigade of Toquéville! Full of emotion as I am at the contemplation of the deeds that you will do, I dismiss you to your homes.'

If he drank forty absinthes during the day, he refused offers of at least forty more. The only fault that the instructor had found with the equipment of the 'Salamander' was the performance of Monsieur Letort. His trumpet-playing was not inspiring, it seemed. Rather was it a dirge for the dead than a rallying-signal to urge brave men to gallant deeds.

But Toquéville understood. It knew of poor Hippolyte's blighted hopes; and great-hearted Toquéville forgave.

Since the day of the meeting in the Café of Progress the barber had become a changed man. He who had been so cheery a companion, as ready as any man to accept the offer of a Quinquina Dubonnet or a Vermouth-Cassis, now led a solitary life. All his spare time he spent in the back of his shop, making melancholy sounds on the trumpet of the brave life-savers.

How could Madame Bachot resist the pathos of these awful sounds? said Toquéville. Were they not as the tempestuous heaving of a breaking heart? If she were human she would suddenly burst open the door of 'The Fantaisies' and throw herself into the arms of the love-lorn Hippolyte.

She did no such thing. But she invented the 'Santos Dumont' blotting-book. This contrivance was the most appalling sight that the naked eye of man has ever been called upon to face. (Purple plush, seaweed, and mother-o'-pearl had a share in the matter.) As Madame Bachot had sold two hundred examples of 'Santos' in the first half of the season, it was clear to poor Hippolyte that he stood less chance than ever against his rival.

The barber's woeful countenance was the one dark spot on the glorious 15th of August. Gaiety reigned supreme in Toquéville. Never before had so many *consommations* been consumed between 10.30 and midday on the terrace of the Grand Hotel. No band had ever played with such admirable art as the Fanfare of the United Brothers of Boulogne. Never had the anthem of Toquéville been sung by so many voices, and with so little regard for tune, as on that day.

Hundreds of water-babies, dressed chiefly in braces and knickerbockers, had marched through the streets singing merrily the curious *patois* song:

On dit qu'au Toquet
 I gna pas d'progrès,
 Oh ! quell' grande erreur, mesdames !
 Il paraît qu'on fait
 Un tonneau propre
 Pour arroser l'macadam.
 Mais voilà le hic,
 Faut, pour qu'on l' fabrique,
 Du bois d'arbre ; mais bernique !
 On n' peut pas trouver
 Un bon jardinier
 Pour planter l'arbre et l' faire pousser.

Never before had so many English visitors struggled with the intricacies of its refrain :

Nous n' somm's plus des Cucquois,
 Vraiment c'était bête, bête,
 Nous somm's Toquévillois,
 Ça c'est bien plus chouette ! chouette !
 Nous avons un' forêt
 A la pointe du Toquet,
 Des p'tits chalets,
 Frais et coquets,
 En bois, en pierre ou en fer,
 Sur le Boul'vard de la Mer,
 Sur l' Boul'vard de la Mer,
 Dont nous sommes tous fiers.

After lunch the great event of the day took place—the official christening of the fire-engine in the Place de la République. The 'Salamander' was tricked out with a quantity of artificial flowers and real ferns, till it looked like nothing so little as a fire-engine. The enthusiasm of the Toquévillois had made a perfect fool of the 'Salamander.' It was more brilliant even than Madame Bachot, who was looking hot and handsome in purple plush.

Amidst the sounds of martial music Madame Dachicourt broke a bottle of the beer of the country over the shamefaced machine, and stated in a few well-chosen but inaudible words that henceforward, through all the ages, it would be known as the 'Salamander.'

Then it was poor broken-hearted Letort's turn to speak. A year ago he would have been proud of this opportunity of delivering a flood of well-selected words. But it was limply, and without any symptom of his old sprightliness, that he stepped into the reserved space in front of Monsieur Dachicourt. All the smartness seemed to have faded out of his sponge-bag trousers; but his trumpet glittered bravely in the sunlight.

These were his words :

'I have the honour of presenting to the syndicate of proprietors of Toquéville, in the name of the commission over which I have presided up till to-day, this superb fire-engine, so aptly named the "Salamander."

'It has been acquired, as you, Monsieur le Président, are well aware, by the subscription of our sympathetic fellow-citizens. To-day the duties of my commission, which has recruited the

splendid group of life-savers now surrounding the "Salamander," are at an end. For my commission, in a word, retires.'

A silence that was full of emotion followed these words. Toquéville stood aghast. Though the depth of Letort's grief about his love-affair was fully understood by all, it was felt that his ridiculously simple and straightforward speech was a disgrace to him and to Toquéville's reputation for eloquence. Had he chosen a single word that was worth the choosing? Not one. Had he shed tears over his resignation? Not a tear. He had destroyed Toquéville's reputation, not only for eloquence, but for emotion.

Happily Dachicourt was equal to the situation. Before the first murmurs against Letort were audible he spoke:

'I thank you, Monsieur Letort, not only in my own name, which you all know, but in the name of the admirable and estimable syndicate of honourable proprietors of our renowned watering-place, by which I mean—need I say it?—Toquéville. (*Applause.*) Your generous and intellectual applause proves to me that I need not. But were that applause absent, I should not hesitate to state and affirm openly, even in a storm of hostile and ignorant dissension, the fact that I allude to Toquéville.'

The audience immediately recognised real eloquence. Thunderous applause greeted Dachicourt's admission that he alluded to Toquéville.

'My sympathetic and loyal colleagues, and I myself (pardon my egotism), fully realise, my dear Monsieur Letort, all the zeal that you have shown, all the efforts that you have made, all the pains that you have taken, all the thought that you have expended, in order to bring your superhuman task to a successful termination. (*Applause and music.*) You had faith in your enterprise, and you have been justified in your faith. You have triumphed. We thank you. I thank you. Toquéville thanks you. Pas-de-Calais thanks you. France thanks you!!' (*Prolonged applause without music, but with some horn-blowing.*)

'With our thanks receive, also, our congratulations. But we shall cease to be of accord if you think, for one instant, of resigning your commission. We invite you to continue your services by becoming a sub-section of our syndicate.'

Dachicourt opened his fat arms wide to welcome the proposed sub-section. Strong and influential men, whose position in

Toquéville entitled them to do so, wept. Less important persons merely blew horns or kissed their own wives publicly.

Letort alone was unmoved.

'He is carrying his callousness too far' was the general comment. 'He should cast aside for a moment his private grief, and show some sort of emotion at the public honour conferred upon him by our brave President. Why, the fellow does not shed a tear! Come, come, he is a mean specimen! The man is evidently too miserable to weep!'

Suddenly a burly Englishman with a Kodak, who was standing next to Letort, started weeping. This large man dressed in khaki, with a quantity of saddlery about his person, sobbed ostentatiously into a bandana. If the public had been annoyed at the restraint shown by Letort, it was incensed at the emotion of the Englishman. His broad shoulders were heaving with sorrow, but they were so broad that the idea of kicking him, if it had occurred to anyone present, was at once abandoned.

'What the devil do you mean by mixing yourself up in a function which does not concern you?' was the most that the bravest ventured on.

The big man was wrapped up in his grief, and did not reply.

'Pig of an Englishman, what right have you to weep over the "Salamander" of Toquéville?'

Then the man removed his handkerchief and roared with laughter.

'You imbeciles,' he explained in good French. 'It seems that you wanted somebody to weep at your stupid function, and I thought I might do the job as well as anybody else.'

'You have no right,' cried excited voices.

'No right! Why, I subscribed five francs to the gimcrack myself. I only pretended to weep, to please you!'

'Pretended! You mock yourself at the "Salamander"!'

'I don't care a tuppenny ticket about the whole bag of tricks. But I did this amateur weeping so that you can get on with the performance. I'm going back to Boulogne, and I want to photograph your damned silly pantomime. Go on with the show. I draw for the comic papers.'

'The English are as a race well known to be pigs,' said Dachicourt. (*Immense applause.*) Matifat maintained discreetly to a few friends that there existed a large and a growing class of

Englishmen who were more piglike than was really necessary. To this class, he hinted, the Englishman in khaki undoubtedly belonged.

The episode was at an end, but the piggishness of the Englishman and the self-restraint of Letort cast something of a blight over the gaiety of the afternoon.

By the evening it had worn off, and at ten o'clock the scene on the Boulevard de la Mer was brilliant to a degree. Outside the Grand Hotel stood the noble 'Salamander,' decked with flowers and Japanese lanterns. Children were dancing round it, climbing on it, putting sand into it, caressing it, naming their dogs after it.

On the terrace of the Grand Hotel the brave life-savers of Toquéville sat drinking to it. Earlier in the evening they had described all the gallant deeds that could be done with it. Now they were describing these gallant deeds as having actually been done with it. They spoke of the 'Salamander' as 'That Veteran of the Flames.' Such is the simple faith of the Toquévillois that he believes as implicitly in the future as in the past. Tell him to do anything for you—immediately from his point of view the thing is done. He does not require to move further in the matter.

The hisses of the rockets, the shouts of the firemen, the sigh of 'L'Amoureuse' by the orchestra, the cries of the children, made the night as gay as anyone could wish. The moon shone out on the 'Salamander,' that had been made such a fool of, and everyone was singing a new satirical verse of the song of the town :

Le clou d' cette année,
C'est qu'on s'a payé,
Un' pompe à pomper tout' neuve,
Mais voilà l'chiendent,
D' l'eau pour mettr' dedans
Forcément elle en s'ra veuve ;
Mais y a les pompiers,
Des homm's bien taillés,
L'capitain' pour les ranger,
Mais c' qu'il faut souhaiter
C'est qu' pompe et pompiers
N'aient jamais besoin de marcher.

Poor 'Salamander' ! Everyone, even the pig of an Englishman, seemed to mock him.

But the hour of his revenge was near.

The refrain had just been begun for the thousandth time :

Nous n' somm's plus des Cucquois,
 Vraiment c'était bête, bête,
 Nous somm's Toquévillois,
 Ça, c'est bien plus chouette! chouette!
 C'est nous qui nous baignons.
 Et qui désensablons
 Nos p'tit's maisons
 Qu' nous construisons
 En bois, en pierre ou en fer. . . .

'Fire!'

The cry rang like a pistol-shot through the riot in front of the hotel.

'Fire! Fire!'

Confusion, chaos.

'Letort! Where is Letort? Sound the trumpet.'

Letort was not to be found. 'The Salamander!' 'The instructor from Boulogne!! The brave life-savers!!!'

The instructor had throughout the day put himself on a strict diet of absinthe and cigarettes. He was incapable of imparting instruction. And the brave life-savers? They were huddled masses of blue blouses, with glittering helmets put on the wrong way.

'The Veteran of the Flames' looked a perfect fool in the moonlight.

In vain did strong but unfamiliar arms strip him of his flowers and attempt to set him in motion. He was clogged with sand. His hose was gone.

The children had played cruel tricks with his axles. Suddenly one of his wheels came off, and he fell jingling and useless to the ground.

'Where is the fire? Get buckets full of water.'

'The fire is at Madame Bachot's.'

'No, it is Monsieur Letort's.'

'It is "The Fantaisies."''

'No, it is the Villa Hippolyte.'

'It is both!'

And both it was. The flames had caught firmly hold of the two shops.

They at least were doomed. Madame Bachot, assisted by many willing helpers, was rescuing the more fanciful of her creations. Of Letort there was no trace. The flames did their work thoroughly.

And when the sun rose on August 16 Madame Bachot, in bedraggled purple plush, stood hand-in-hand with Monsieur Letort, gazing at the smoking ashes that alone remained of 'The Fantaisies' and the Villa Hippolyte.

There are at least four things on which there are no differences of opinion in Toquéville:

1. That Marie-Eugénie Bachot has better taste than anybody outside of Paris.
2. That Hippolyte, such was the power of his love, burnt down the original 'Fantaisies.'
3. That though the English are, as a race, pigs, it is well to insure in their offices.
4. That the 'Salamander' is a veteran of the flames.

FRANK RICHARDSON.

ON A FOREST.

BY HORACE G. HUTCHINSON.

WE have lost a very picturesque element out of the noblest of all sports that a man in Great Britain pursues on foot—by which I mean stalking the red-deer stag—since we have given up the use of the old Scottish deer-hound. He is such a fine fellow, so eminently in his place on the hill as a detail of the whole magnificent scene. And he is so reminiscent of all the traditions that we have of the sport, of Bran, the favourite dog of Sir Walter Scott, and of the canine friends of other heroes. But if he is so eminently in his place as a picturesque accessory, he is eminently out of place if he is chasing all the deer off the forest. Not that he will of necessity run wild, but on the whole we find the collie more judicious, more amenable, as staunch in sticking to the trail of a wounded stag in preference to the others of the herd, and, if less swift, still fast enough to bring most stricken stags to bay. Nevertheless, for purposes of scenery he is not the equal of the deer-hound that he has supplanted.

For all that, there remains much that is attractive to the eye of artist, animal lover, and sport lover in the start of the stalking party from the lodge—the sure-footed pony, with the heavy deer saddle that is slung about with the buckled thongs that we hope to see bound about a good stag before the day is done, the stalker—the professional—a stalwart Highlander with the erect free carriage that walking the heather-clad hills does not fail to give, the two gillies, one to be in waiting with the pony till he is summoned to fetch down the body of the stag, the other to carry the rifle until the critical moments of a stalk. This man and the stalker will be hung about with spy-glasses, and the henchman of lesser degree will have a thong for the leading of the attendant collie who superintends all the preparations with a wise, subdued eagerness. Finally there is the stalker, the amateur, himself—he too with a spy-glass; and all the humans of the party are clad in caps, coats, and knickerbockers of tweed that may vary in its hue from green to grey, or brown that is hardly to be distinguished at a little range from the greens and

purples which are the prevailing colours of the hills. The dog himself is by preference of a tawny tint, to cheat the quick vision of the deer. There is something impressive, until use has made it all too familiar, in this start from the relatively genial climate and artificial surroundings, of attempted flower-beds, &c., of the lodge, for a day-long tramp in the hills whose heads are lost in the mist that lies nine days out of ten on the tops of the Grampians.

It was not my intention at the beginning to give an indication of the locality that the sketch touches, but the indication has slipped out unawares, and it is there, on the Grampian Hills, that its scene lies. After all, it is an indication that is general enough, so many are the forests that run up to, and over, the tops of that fine range. It is a very noble scene, scarcely to be rivalled among those that form the background of the deer-stalker's sport.

For a mile or two, and may be for five or six, after leaving the lodge, the way is likely to go over ground that is comparatively low, for the most part pinewood, with undergrowth of heather, whortleberry shrub, juniper, moss tussocks, and bracken. Here, though the way is level in comparison with paths and pathless places that must be traversed later, the shooter will be wise to avail himself of the pony's services. On the return journey it is to be hoped that these services will not be at his command, but required for bearing down at least one horned monarch of the forest, and between the out-going and the home-coming there is some arduous work to do. Throughout this lowland ground of pinewood there is a constant chance of seeing black game and roe, a small herd or two of hinds are likely to be spied—the stalker turning his glass upon them for a moment, only to shut it up again with a scornful click. 'Just hinds' is apt to be his disdainful comment, or at best, 'There is a sma' stag with them; but, ach, he's of no account.' Down in the woodlands you will seldom, until late in the season, see a stag of any importance—'a suitable beast' as they will call it. The small ones that you find there in company with the hinds are commonly just the 'boy stags' that have not yet cast themselves wholly free from their mothers' apron strings. The big stags will be quite away from the woods, on the open forest—perhaps, indeed probably, on the misty 'tops.'

After a time the trees grow less thickly, the character of the land changes, becomes broken into ridge and glen, the woodland

gradually gives place to bare hillside, and soon you are come to the well-known hillock, giving a good prospect of the range of mountainous land before you, that is your first spying-place. Your stalker calls a halt. You will dismount, rather stiffly may be, for though the deer saddle gives you almost as good a seat as the saddles of Spanish make that are used in Mexico, it is too broad for comfort, and you will feel that your legs have been at an uneasy stretch for hours. The pony's walk has been just a little less rapid than that of the men who go with the springy, high-stepping, and slightly swaying gait that is learned by tramping over the heather and gives their rhythmic swing to the kilt skirts of a Highland regiment on the march. It is a fine movement, but your pony does not pay it the compliment of imitation, and you have to keep him up to the paces of the men by a perpetual digging at his ribs with your heels that is scarcely less fatiguing than walking itself.

On the heather-clad hill you lie, or recline, with such support as you may find for the steadying of your back, and scan with the glasses as much of the forest as your position lets you command. It is a business that requires not only a general inspection born of practice in the use of the glass, but also a knowledge of the peculiar features of the ground that you are trying to spy, and for this reason: it may be that your vantage-point gives you a sight along the whole sweep of a hillside going away from you. It may seem that you can spy it carefully and find any stag or hind that lies upon it. But this is far from being the case. You can spy, it is true, every stag that is there within your view, and it seems as if your view took in the whole hillside; but this appearance is deceptive. However level may seem some of the stretches of the forest, it is certain that here and there will be depressions, and here and there rising undulations of which the one crest seems to you, even with the best glass, to be continuous with the next. But it is not so really, and in a very moderate depression of this nature may be a herd of deer, containing possibly the finest stag in Scotland, and all without showing an ear-tip or a horn-tip to your spying. There is but one vantage-point for the proper and thorough spying of a hillside at one time, and that is the hillside opposite to it, and even then some turns and twists may escape you. All these features of the ground it is necessary to know before you can not only thoroughly spy the ground, but know even how to set about its proper spying. Any less thorough method

leaves a possibility that the best stag in the British Islands is lying there unseen by you.

But from your knoll, which is your first spying-place, you have to be content with surveying just as much as you can, knowing that you will have many another opportunity of studying the further and higher ground as you go on. For the present let us see what we may. All the while that the spying is in progress, a *sotto voce* conversation will be going on between the stalker and the gillie who has the spy-glass; but as it is maintained in their natural tongue of Gaelic it is not likely that you will gain much edification from it, but, on the contrary, some slight exasperation such as we all feel when we are being kept out of a secret. And this secret may be such a very good one—no less, may be, than that the ‘biggest stag in all the world,’ as Mr. Jorrocks would have said had he been a deer-stalker, is within the ken of their glasses. And by noticing a convergence of the spy-glasses of those two attendants, after an exchange of these confidences, and by following its line with your own glass, you perceive that there are, indeed, some hinds on a low spur of the hill, and with them, indubitably, stags—two stags. But are they ‘suitable’? You ask this question anxiously of the stalker. ‘Ach, well,’ he says, with that slightly Scottish accent which he has taken on in learning the English tongue. ‘There is one that is no such a bad beast.’ ‘The one that’s lying in the path?’ ‘The one in the path, that’s him.’ The stalker’s study of the English has been for the most part colloquial. ‘And can we get at him?’ ‘Oh, aye, we could get at him very well, if only he will stay.’ ‘But you think he will not stay?’ ‘Ach, well, the hinds that he is with are moving back, right for the march.’ Pros and cons being discussed, the conclusion is reached that he is worth a trial, seeing that no better ‘beast’ appears in sight. Your way, to circumvent him, lies up the main glen, where you may hope to get better points of view, and, may be, a better stag will come within the glasses’ range, on which the beast that is but moderately ‘suitable’ may be abandoned, in the hope of bigger things. But there is always the chance, perhaps to be named the probability, that the stag will move. You will lose sight of him as you go up the glen. Therefore the gillie with the pony is bid to remain where he is, with instructions, and a spy-glass. The spy-glass is to enable him to see if the stag goes over the march, and the instructions are that he shall tie his hand-

kerchief (and a gillie has a handkerchief) to the stump of an old tree, there to remain as long as the stag shall remain, thence to be removed in the event of the stag's removing himself across the boundary. Then you go up the glen, with hope beating high. The man, the pony, and the handkerchief fall out of sight as you go on, but after a mile of steady walking along the relatively flat, or only gently rising ground, the stalker, with a motion of his hand, silently bidding you follow him, turns upward, to the left, and you begin to mount. The first point that gives you a view of the knoll from which the stag was spied is gained in some perturbation of mind; but all, so far, is well, the handkerchief remains, and so, too, the stag. Again you mount the steep incline. Again and again an anxious glance southward shows the handkerchief still in place, and hope constantly beats higher, until, without warning, the stalker suddenly gives evidence that he has more English at command than you had expected by exclaiming, 'Damn!' Then, as you glance towards him with inquiry, 'The handkerchief is down.' It is true. It is a sad fact. No prolonged gazing through the glass can reproduce that handkerchief. It has gone, and so, too, it must be assumed, has the stag. There is no more to say. The stalker has said all there is to say for you, politely. It remains only to 'take a sit,' as he expresses it, and have a spy, to see if any more beasts suitable can be spied from the higher ground now reached.

It is higher ground than before, but there remains beyond ground immeasurably higher yet. 'Immeasurable' is a big word, but it hardly seems too big for you, as you look upward at the 'tops.' That ascent has not been lost which you made in the attempted stalk that failed. You are by that much higher, and keeping along the hillside at the same level you come at length to that saddle-back formation joining the smaller hill to the veritable mountain beyond. Still no beast 'suitable' has been spied, and now you are face to face with a rise that is precipitous. Hardly is the ascent to be called walking. There is work for hands as well as feet in scaling it. At times it is fairly climbing. The stalker is merciful, considerate of the weakness of muscles less whipcordy than his own, sparing, as you are well aware, not his legs, but yours. The dog is beginning to be impatient for some sport. He does not whine, but allows himself the luxury of panting constrainedly with quick-coming breath. The stalker rebukes him, and at once he is perfectly silent, holding in his

hurried breathing. The air grows keener as you mount, and the view constantly more extended and magnificent. As the sun rises higher the mists on the 'tops' dissolve, the dissolution itself forming a glorious spectacle and study of atmospheric effects, but the details that it reveals are more glorious yet. The air begins to be rarefied at these heights, for you must be about three thousand feet from the sea-level, but you have to go higher yet, nearly to the level of Ben-Macdhui itself, before you reach the march.

Of course there always is the possibility that you may not have to attain that end of all things for you before you see a stag. There is at every moment, or every fifteen minutes, let us say, as you open up new ground, a chance of spying a 'beast'; but new heights are gained, and the day wears on to midday, and still you have sighted nothing worth a stalk except that doubtful stag that has moved on. Of him your opinion has deteriorated not a little since you found that you could not make him yours. Obviously his value in your eyes would have gone up had you got him, and on a like argument it is comfort to think of him as but a poor beast, which he was, since he has gone from you definitely.

Towards one, or later, that is to say at luncheon time, for which you are more than ready, you come to a great cairn set up by Nature on the summit of a spur thrown out by the highest hill. Here, on the windward side, the gale tears and rages, coldly keen, though it is a hot day and, in the low country, a calm day. But when is the day calm on these high tops? It is glorious; and hence, still on the windward side, you can spy new ground, which, so far, sad to say, shows no beasts of important size upon it. A distant herd or two of hinds are visible; but no more. On the leeward side of the great stones there is peace, and here you may enjoy luncheon and a marvellous panorama. One thing that you may not enjoy is water, for at the foot of the worst ascent—that which you climbed in quadrupedal style—the stalker invited you to drink from a spring, for there was no water in the upper country whither you were going. He produced from his pocket a cup, simply but adequately constructed from his baby's indiarubber ball, which had gone 'bust.' There is no more conveniently carried drinking cup. So you drank, with a moderation suggested by the frowning precipice before you, and now, at luncheon, there is no water. But there is whisky, pleasant whisky, undiluted whisky; and at this height, in this air, after this

climb, the whisky does not seem to want dilution. It goes down neat quite kindly; you imbibe it with a freedom on which you would not venture in the plains below, and you feel the better for it. Otherwise than well, it is impossible to feel. You have not, it is true, killed your stag, but you have climbed into heights unknown and you have such a view as you are disposed to think no man ever feasted his eyes on, while he drank raw whisky, before. There are the Grampians—Macdhui, Cairn-gorm, and all that goodly company to whom you heretofore have lifted humbly wondering eyes. Now, here, they are your boon companions, you are on their own level, you feel inclined to ask them to taste your whisky with you. But they look thirsty fellows, even as you are thirsty, so you refrain. These peaks are all about you, close at hand. But further off the panorama is unlimited. There is the line of the Highland Railway marked by clusters of white houses, leading south through the hills indefinitely towards Perth and north towards that gleaming mirror which is the Moray Firth, with Tarbet Ness for its rim, and beyond, and above, the Sutherlandshire mountains. Along with the railway line the Spey goes, gleaming towards the north. Eastward and westward your view is less extensive, but it is gloriously bounded, on the sea side with the summits of the hills and on the other by dark craggy precipices, up which not even a red-deer stag could pass. But something there is that can scale them, that revels and dwells in them, and now he comes sailing towards you through the golden haze into which the sun has transformed the mist—a splendid golden eagle, winging the air as if conscious of the lordship which man has assigned him among birds. He passes so close that you catch the bright glint from his eye, which seems to fall on you in anger, rather than in fear, that you should invade his solitudes with your vulgar presence. Then he deigns not to notice you again, but with great sweeps of his wings, that seem to stir the air in your sheltered cranny, makes his swift way across the hills towards the glen of Invermark.

The sun warms the shelter of your cairn, and it is very peaceful. But those 'tops' are cruel places. For the moment the sunlight is on them, the ptarmigan, not yet in winter plumage of white, nor yet keeping all of their summer's brown, are scudding about before you over the stones, the blue hares, still summery in hue, run, and sit and wonder at you, then run again, after

their foolish manner. It is very pleasant there now. But the 'tops' can be wonderfully different from all this, and sometimes the change comes perilously quickly. Many and many a man going forth on a fair-seeming morning, and with no thought at heart more serious than the shooting of a red-deer stag, has found himself battling hard for his life by mid-day. The first of the visitations to come upon you on these occasions is the mist. It is less black and less dirty than the London fog, but it is no less obscuring, blinding. The next footstep is doubtful. Even your stalker who knows the hill as you know Piccadilly cannot tell you whether you are on the edge of this precipice or of that, any more than you in the fog whether the next turning up is Albemarle or Bond Street. Therefore from the region of precipice you will escape, if you have the commonest prudence, and if it be possible (it is far from always possible) so soon as ever there is a threatening of the mist's descent. But then, by way of the second plague or visitation, the mist begins to be punctuated with sleet arrows, terribly stinging as they fly on the wind.

You see what the wind is on a pleasant day, when it was a calm at the Lodge, on these 'tops.' You may judge from that, by working a rough rule of three sum, what it is like there on a day when it is windy at the lower level. The sleet arrows are more than can be borne for long. You have to seek the shelter of some dimly seen cairn or rock. Where are the blue hares and ptarmigan now? They too are sheltering under cover of some kindly boulders, but of them too some will be missing, starved to death or frozen, before this storm is overpast. And how of yourselves? For your part, not having coats of natural fur or feathers, nor the 'tops' as your natural habitat, it is not possible for you to cower in lee of these sheltering boulders for ever. You must out again and face the sleet arrows, be they never so sharp and stinging. But now the nature of the visitation is likely to become a little changed. Sleet seems to be the normal forerunner of snow, of which the flakes soon begin to scud through the storm. It is a change in some measure for the better, but in some measure only. The flakes do not sting like the sleet arrows; but they stay where they lodge, and, though you are warm enough from battling with the elements, you quickly learn how low the temperature is by the caking of the snow into a frozen mass about your eyes and your ears, in your hair, moustache, and everywhere that it gets a lodgment. Also the flakes help in the general confusion and

blinding of the senses incredibly. You struggle forward as best you may, trusting to the local knowledge of the stalker to lead you aright in this land of confusion and blind turmoil, conscious that if one of the party break down, even though it be through some trivial accident such as the twisting of an ankle, any such accident must mean death, for no two can carry a third—they have all their work to see to themselves and their own foothold—and long before they can summon help from below the one left on the 'tops' will be stiff and cold. Every moment you are haunted by the fear that one of you may break down, and by the doubt whether that one may not be yourself.

Happily, the faculty of forgetting past danger, toil, and suffering is the common property of mankind. After hours of battling with these perils, of which you say little to each other, though knowing that through the mind of each pass the thoughts that come to your own mind, by next day or the day after you are ready to smile at all you have passed through and seek the 'tops' again with no less pleasant anticipations than those of yesterday. And the morrow may find you basking in lee of the high-piled cairn surveying a scene from which all these strugglings with death seem very far remote.

The whisky and your pipe are finished, and, if a stag is to be yours to-day, it is time to be up again and doing. Most of the ground you have searched out with your glasses; but upward and onward still, nearly at the mountain's summit, there is a corrie, almost on your march, that you cannot see. There, for aught you know, may be that finest stag in Scotland; and thither, having come so far, it is almost a point of honour to arrive, even if the point of honour were not tinged, as it is, with the bright hope of a horned head and a heavy stag.

The keen wind comes honestly and directly from the corrie. There is little demand on the stalker's cunning. The most ordinary precaution will enable the merest tiro to gain the edge of the corrie and look down into it undetected. Yet, even so, the way is not without its emotion, for at a certain point the stalker signals the gillie to come to him, takes from the hand of that attendant the rifle and draws it, for the first time during the day, from its cover, 'in case there should be a beast,' as he says, significantly slipping the cartridges into the breach of the repeating Mannlicher. The Mannlicher, so much lighter, handier, and so much flatter in the trajectory of its bullet (for all distances up to

twice that at which you will shoot at a stag, at least), is a blessed advance on the old double-barrelled 450 Express, that made a noise like a cannon and required reloading after the second shot. So, too, in a sense, does the Mannlicher require reloading after each shot; but the twist of the hand by which you do the reloading is an action quickly achieved, very much more quickly than the opening of the breech and slipping in the cartridge, and may be done (always will be done, supposing you to be what you are, an experienced deer-slayer), under cover of the noise of the previous shot. The stag, alert as he is and quick of hearing, has no more the faculty of locating the sound of a shot than other animals, and with the virtually smokeless powder of to-day there is nothing to guide his eye to the spot where danger lies. For a moment he stands irresolute, and while he is still unresolved you may have a second, may be a third and a fourth, shot. Scarcely would you have had more than two with your cumbrous double Express, for the shutting of the breech hardly can be done so noiselessly that you would escape the notice and recognition of your startled stag.

So now you are come to the brae of that last corrie, and every step may bring you in sight of what we may suppose, since supposing is very cheap, to be the biggest stag in all the world. You will not expect that, but it is fair to expect something; yet still, as you go higher and higher on the brae and nothing of interest yet is seen, your heart dies heavily within you, until—'Hist,' the stalker beckons you back. You crouch, obedient to his bidding as a down-charging pointer. He levels his glass. 'There's two beasts,' he says, in a fearful whisper; 'two beasts lying down, with their horns just showing, and ye may see for yourself. There, man! And one a good beast,' he adds, to complete your joy, as you strive to hold the glass in fingers that shall not tremble. It is not a very successful try, the excitement is too terrific. At length you seem to fix them, these two branch-like things above the heather, only to be told in a cross voice: 'No. Yon's no the good one. The good one's there, more west.' Therefore, 'more west' it behoves you to aim the glass; and there, surely enough, you do see at length the horns of the 'good one'; and a real good one he is, as even you, the novice in comparison with him who is stalker to his trade, can tell full well. A good, a 'suitable' stag. Then how to get him?

Well, he is within range from here—a hundred and forty

yards, may be—fair range, if the shot is fair. But you may do better, and may venture nearer than that. The silent dog has been left behind in the gillie's care, fifty yards or so in rear. There is nothing to hinder you, with the wind blowing straight from the stag to you, from creeping, serpent-like, over the heather towards him, and a good deal nearer. It were better so, for even if he be within your range at present, should he offer you a broad-side shot, there is nothing to warrant that things may happen thus. Equally well may it happen that he will rise with his nose towards the wind, his hind-quarters presented to you, and so never may give you a fair shot at all. This is not what you wish. Better creep forward until you are so near that you have several yards to spare, in which he may, perchance, give you the broad-side shot that you desire. If he do not do so kindly of his own accord, you may resort to the expedient of startling him by a call or whistle that shall arrest him for a moment—a moment that you well may make fatal.

Forward, therefore, serpent-wise, over the heather, in that sinuous fashion to which this accursed among the creatures has been condemned since the fall of man. The tip of the horn shown above the heather cannot see you; but somewhere below that horn there is an eye that you do not see, but that may, by chance, have a loophole through which it can spy over the heather towards you. You must take your chances of that; you must creep onwards in good faith. So it goes for twenty and yet another score of yards, and still, when you rise to a kneeling posture with all care, the horn-tips are there unmoving. Now you are within eighty yards. Take another ten, then five more—that is all you can venture. It is enough. It is a great deal more than generally you will get from a red-deer stag in the way of permission to approach him undetected. And having gone so far, there you have to wait. It is possible, of course, but always is risky, to whistle him up. If you do this, he will, ten chances to one, give you a shot. Ten chances to one he will not detect the exact point whence the alarming sound comes, and at once gallop straight away from it. Far more likely is it that he will stand a minute and give you a shot—but it is the shot of an agitated moment. It is not the calm, deliberate shot that you would choose. You have him there, a startled stag, ready to be off at any instant, and your shot inevitably is taken hurriedly. Whether such hurry will mean that you are at all likely to miss

at such short range depends first on your proficiency and next on the kind of shot he offers you. At all events, far better to await his royal pleasure (for already you have written him down in your mental note-book as a royal), to rise to his feet and give you opportunity for a leisurely aim. If he does that, nothing, humanly speaking, should save him.

And, in the meantime, while you wait for him to rise, recognise, if you please, all the dramatic interest of the moment. There, before you, within seventy yards or less, is a noble specimen of the finest beast of venery in the United Kingdom—a red-deer stag. And there are you, with a rifle of unerring, low trajectory. A few minutes, perhaps, may pass before he rises to his feet, but virtually he is yours. Less than seventy yards separate you. And then, as the minutes pass, you figure to yourself how he is to look when he rises, his bulk, the towering sweep of his horns, the steady aim, and his sinking, to rise no more. All this goes through your mental vision delightfully while you lie on the soft heather in the flooding sunshine, and the keen rarefied air passes over you, brushing with a soft whisper round the long tresses of the grass.

The keenness of the air becomes more shrewd as you lie there waiting, with only the emotion of anticipation to stir your pulses. You grow very conscious that you are cold. The sun begins to send the shadows rather more slanting. The side of the corrie on your right lies in a deep purple shade, gloomily magnificent. The time is arriving at which the stag should begin his evening feeding; but he lies on. The situation grows critical. Whispering, very low, a question to your stalker, he replies that the Lodge is distant two hours and a half of hard walking. And you know what his 'hard walking' means. There is a doubt. Is it better to give the stag a whistle, to startle him to his feet, and to take that chance of shooting him, when he is on the alert, or to give him time, yet, to rise of his own accord, when you are likely to take him with a shot as leisurely as you please. Certainly you grow colder and colder, and that does not conduce to accurate aim. And there is the walk home, half of it at least in the dark. Besides, the stag has to be conveyed, somehow, down the mountain. The pony hardly can come by the way you have arrived. All these are points for consideration, but just as you are in the middle debate of them, behold the principal actor in the drama makes a move to settle the dénouement. He has risen to his feet

in a moment, with a haste that fills you with a sick terror. Has he heard you, and is he on the point of bounding off? But no. He stands at gaze up the corrie, not in your direction at all, utterly disregarding you, who lie so close to him in the heather; and, glancing up the corrie, you too may see what has aroused him. Some hinds have come in at the head, and he has jumped to his feet gallantly to gaze at these ladies of his kind. There is a possibility, too, that these ladies, by a curl of the breeze into the corrie's head, might get wind of you. There is no time to lose. The moment is come. You have the broadside shot. 'Take him now,' the stalker whispers; and you prepare to take him.

How grand he looks as he stands there gazing proudly at his ladies, his head aloft, showing his whole bulk to you. It is the easiest shot a stag can give. To miss would be more than a misfortune—a crime. Already, more than an hour ago, you have chosen the rest for your rifle. All is ready. You have but to sight along the barrel. And yet it is wonderful, distinct and vast as that stag looked when you gazed at him with your two eyes fairly, how he seems to grow vague of outline and contracted in size when you glance at him along the rifle barrel with the right eye only open. Few of us are able to shoot (with the rifle, that is) with both eyes open. At the very moment of pressing the trigger, you feel that your vision of him is more vague and uncertain than at any other. But yet the thing must be put to the test, the shot must be taken, and while these and a thousand foolish fears and fancies are in your mind your finger has done the work; the rifle cracks; the stalker, with a Celtic excitement, is patting you on the back; the stag has sunk to his knees, he rolls over, kicks convulsively, legs high in air. You have killed your beast.

So that is done. The other stag, his companion, has risen to his feet, the hinds have stood astonished a moment at the strange thing happening before their eyes, then have made off again over the corrie's head, and the second stag has gone after them. You rise up, with cramped and stiffened limbs, from the heather, and examine your beast; you are alone, you and the stalker, on the hill top, with your dead.

He is a glorious beast; and the contrast between the tiny Mannlicher bullet, that has made all this noble life to cease, and his great bulk is very striking. He is a glorious beast; but the obsequies of a beast, performed by the gillie, who now is quickly

on the scene, are neither glorious nor seemly. They appear like a desecration. Let us leave them without further comment ; and indeed there is no time to linger, for the shadows are lengthening still, and it is well to get as much of the road home done by daylight as may be. But the way does not seem long. It is lightened and cheered, even where it is roughest and hardest, by the vision of that grand stag gazing, sinking to your shot, the reward of the hateful cunning of that little beast man, who has made himself lord of all creation by his wits and his fingers.

And the head of this lord of the forest will be a noble trophy in your hall, and his haunch will be eaten with gastronomic discussion at your table. In all these things there is much irony ; but the irony is not the point that touches you as you go proudly home.

'HOTELS AS HOMES?'

BY LADY GROVE.

No one who has travelled, be it never so little, can fail to have observed how a certain atmosphere, mental and moral, pervades all hotel life, whichever the continent or whatever the country.

My experience of hotels is limited to three continents and about twice as many countries; but it is enough to convince me that life in any hotel as a permanency would be intolerable. From the psychical point of view the Spirit of Unrest, which necessarily has its dominion in hotel-dom, makes sustained effort a difficulty, useful work a struggle, and creative thought an impossibility to the hotel-dweller. From the physical point of view the 'living' of the average 'high-class hotel' is just comfortable enough to accentuate the general discomfort. If one has one's mind attuned to the absence of much that one is accustomed to, one can submit to the process of 'roughing it' with an excellent grace; but if one is constantly reminded by the ghosts of one's former comforts of what one is forced to do without, the shadow makes the absence of the substance the more annoying. For the 'all home comforts' advertised by successful hotel managers are a snare and a delusion.

But, it will be argued, hotels are not supposed to represent 'home life,' and yet there are thousands of people, especially in America, where the servant question is an even greater difficulty than with us, who voluntarily resign themselves to hotel life in preference to having and managing a house of their own. Moreover, any prolonged sojourn in a place beyond, say, three weeks makes it home for the time being, and any persons condemned by their occupations to remain out of their own country will recognise the hopeless feeling of detachment that lays hold of one when doomed to put up with this form of domicile beyond a very limited period.

A friend of mine objected quite seriously to a flat for the weird reason that directly she passed the front door she wished to feel free to rush into any room she chose and burst into tears. And underlying this exaggerated method of expressing the desire

innate in all human breasts for solitude at given times, and freedom from the irksome restraint of surveillance when certain emotions are ever so feebly in the ascendant, rests the imperative need for the 'home' experienced by nearly all, which no socialistic creed will ever prove strong enough to eradicate.

But even if the sense of possessive solitude is absent, one experiences, paradoxically, a marked sense of isolation in the big hotels, where one's indentity is merged in a number, and where 'mine host' is a huge joint-stock company. And, personally, I find this preferable to the wayside inn, where one's name is very much to the fore with the landlady and her bucolic spouse.

Of the latter kind I had a never-to-be-repeated experience at a coast-town inn which shall be nameless, where the landlady introduced herself by enlarging on the advantage I enjoyed in finding an hotel kept by 'people of the same class' as myself. On paying my bill I comforted myself with the reflection that I was paying for this privilege 'thrown in.' As might be expected from persons of the class to which we both belong, this good landlady and I, she got the better of me in the matter of the exchange (as I discovered when there were three good days' journey between us), charged me two pesetas for cleaning her washhand-stand, and one dollar for mending her mosquito curtain.

But at least the hotel-dweller is spared certain experiences calculated to make the thrifty housewife what an American friend of mine calls 'hopping mad.' Such an experience, for instance, as fell to my lot when, having sent up certain provisions to a house we had taken with a view to entering it in a few days, I found on our arrival that the bedroom washhand-stands were all furnished with neat square pieces of carbolic scrubbing-soap. The floors had been washed with the Vinolia otto of rose tablets given at the same time as the other, with manifold explanations, to the intelligent negress whose duty it had been to 'prepare' the house for our reception.

There is no doubt that a household whose staff includes a competent, conscientious housekeeper realises the highest ideal of comfort possible in home life. But as this joyous consummation is an unattainable ideal to many who are unequal to the struggle necessary to obtaining the same outward result through their own agency, they fall back upon the hotel as the nearest approach to this state of irresponsible well-being. But even in

this beatific condition one's personal attendants refuse to accept any intermediary, and one remains directly responsible to one's maid for her comfort and well-being. When, many years ago, I blossomed out almost from childhood into a full-blown state of matrimonial responsibility, I did some travelling in America. One day we arrived at an hotel in some town between New York and Chicago, and my immediate personal wants having been attended to, I dismissed my maid with the injunction that she herself was to go and feed. She re-entered my room a few seconds after with indignation depicted on her usually good-humoured Scotch face. 'A nice sort of place we've come to, this,' she exclaimed; 'when I asked one of the waiters where the maids had their meals, he answered impudently, "Along with the married women, to be sure."' She failed to see any justification for my amusement, but was pacified by a stern demand from her employer that his wife's lady's-maid should immediately be conducted to the apartment reserved for the meals of the personal attendants of the hotel guests. Her troubles, however, at this same place were not at an end, for on calling me next morning she appeared with eyes swollen and red, having spent a sleepless night bug-hunting. The strange, absolutely unprecedented appearance of these uninvited guests was accounted for by the manager of the hotel by the fact that my unfortunate maid's room had been occupied the night before by a commercial traveller, whose own version of the affair we were of course unable to obtain.

I here apologise for writing the name of this obnoxious insect other than as 'b—g.' I knew a lady, whose refined conversation it was my privilege occasionally to enjoy, who in the autumn of the year used to find herself troubled with what she called 'harvest hum-hums,' and it would be difficult for me now to recognise this insidious little plague by any other name. When, however, we asked this same lady if she did not think that this ultra-refinement, which shirked the naming of so open-air a little animal as the harvest-bug, was rather 'hum hum-hum,' she did not follow us at all. Her refinement was, however, amply accounted for by a fact with which she was at pains to acquaint her listeners, namely, that *her* ancestors were French marquises while the ancestors of most of the people thus unaccountably unable to appreciate the advantage of having her as a neighbour were digging potatoes. However, our ancestors not having been French marquises, we put the matter very plainly before our innkeeper,

and told him that such troubles were a disgrace to the principal hotel in so important a city as the one we were stopping at, and, with many expressions of regret, and efforts at conciliation towards the offended lady, we resumed our way.

The American hotels, however, from what I hear, are vastly improved since the days of which I write—now, I regret to confess, nearly twenty years ago. Nowadays, nearly all over the States, I hear that, even in the remote towns, the hotels are sumptuous palaces. Numerous time-saving inventions decorate each bedroom. Wonderful wheels, for instance, which when turned with the handle pointing to where the names of certain articles are inscribed, will, within an incredibly short space of time, produce a waiter bringing with him either hot, cold, iced, or soda water, whisky, brandy, tea, coffee, or almost any other daily or hourly need that your soul happens to long for, before your soul, weary with waiting, has had time to 'go back on you,' as it often does in less electrical countries, when a stultifying resignation takes the place of a gratified craving.

But even without these 'modern improvements,' such as the 'magic wheel' and the nerve-harrowing telephone, the American hotels were more luxurious and commodious than English or French hotels at the same period. The adjacent bathroom was a continual source of delight and refreshment when one arrived at one's destination weary, travel-stained and forlorn. The negro waiters, too, afforded us much diversion. I remember on one occasion expostulating with one for his inattention, saying: 'I have asked you twice before for'—whatever it was I wanted. 'Pardon me, ma'am,' he replied with great dignity, 'it was another coloured gentleman you asked.' A reply of that kind is quite enough to disarm any amount of indignation.

The 'tips' at an hotel are, as I found to my dismay on the first occasion when, being alone, I had to do all the paying myself, a very formidable item. And *à propos* of this difficulty I recently came across the following note to the *Westminster Gazette* under the head of 'Good News for Swiss Tourists':

If the conference of Swiss commercial travellers, hotel-keepers, and other interested persons which has just taken place at Olten has its way, then the burden of the summer tourist in Switzerland will be considerably lightened. The above-mentioned would-be benefactors of the travelling public met in order to find some remedy for the ever-increasing system of 'tips,' which obliges the traveller to pay away almost as much as his hotel expenses proper to the army of hotel servants. It has now been decided—by the thrice-blessed Olten conference

—that a fixed 'tarif des pourboires' is to be drawn up, and if this tariff is at all mercifully conceived (from the traveller's point of view), then travelling in Switzerland will be a good deal less expensive. According to the nice old French formula, tips are 'onerous to those who give them and humiliating to those who receive them,' and the proposed tariff ought, therefore, to be equally welcome to 'tipster' and 'tipped.'

But it is not only at hotels that the system of 'tips' is irksome, and at times humiliating to both 'tipper' and 'tippee,' as I prefer to render the giver and receiver of 'tips.' In this matter the guests of wealthy owners of large country houses sometimes suffer considerable inconvenience, keepers, coachmen and grooms without, and butlers, footmen and housemaids within, all expecting and receiving 'tips' from one or other of the guests of a large house party. I was told once of an extraordinary experience undergone by a lady, to whom economy was rendered none the less necessary from the fact that circumstances compelled her to visit much amongst relations and friends to whom this most irksome form of ignominy was unknown. She was paying a definite Monday to Friday visit at a large, luxurious country house, and to her delight she found in her bedroom a neat little *affiche*, a duplicate of which was in each guest-chamber, to the effect that the host and hostess earnestly requested that no 'tips' should be given to any of the servants. To her dismay, however, when all the guests were assembling in the hall previous to their imminent departure in the various brakes, carriages, and flies that were waiting ready to convey them to the station, she perceived the stately and dignified groom of the chambers standing statuesquely near the front door, holding a plate resembling those used in church for collections, in which several gold pieces were already gleaming. In answer to my friend's petrified gaze, her hostess stepped forward and said sweetly, 'Yes, we consider this a much fairer way of dealing with the presents our guests are kind enough to wish to give one's servants. Anything they like to give is distributed fairly between those who really have had extra work to do for a large party of this kind; otherwise only those who are *en évidence*, and who really do nothing extra, are given anything.' The little gift which the poor lady had been congratulating herself she would be able to take home to her child was swallowed up in this brazen receptacle.

A gallant little midshipman once bravely resisted the onslaught

of one of the pampered, overfed harpies whose depredations we suppose the good lady referred to above tried to stop by so mistaken a method. He offered the magnificent individual who had been 'valeting' him two-and-sixpence on leaving; but that dignitary threw up his hand, saying, 'I never haccept hanythink but gold,' whereupon the 'middy' returned the half-crown to his pocket, exclaiming, 'What a brick you are! I find half-crowns awfully useful.' Perhaps this was the first youth the creature had not been successful in intimidating into giving up half-a-sovereign of his precious little store.

I once had a curious experience of this kind in my still early married days. I was paying a visit of two nights' duration in a country house, and before dinner the second night I saw a sovereign drop, unobserved by my husband, out of a pocket of the waistcoat he was just taking off. Considering him to be at all times over-careless in the matter of ready money, I quietly rescued the coin, and, returning to my room, secreted it in a corner of the dressing-table underneath a muslin cover, meaning to question and reprimand him later on. We left next morning, and, alas! for the moral influence I fervently desired and intended to wield, I stupidly forgot all about this secreted coin. However, never dreaming it was other than in safety where I had put it, and having no doubt, either then or subsequently, as to the exact spot in which it had been left, and not wishing to trouble my hostess, I wrote a line (in addition to the 'Collins' letter I had dutifully bored my hostess with) to the daughter of the house, explaining the circumstances and asking her to send the pound to me. By return of post I received a furious letter from my whilom hostess, enclosing half-a-crown, and saying that *that* was the only piece of money I had left on the dressing-table in the room I occupied, which the housemaid had presumed was intended as a gift to her, but that since I accused her of theft she declined to accept anything from me, and therefore she had begged her mistress to return it to me, without thanks, I presume. The correspondence ended there, and, like the 'middy,' I pocketed my half-crown, the poorer by seventeen-and-sixpence only for my unhappily conceived, would-be practical lesson on thrift and heedfulness.

It often happens that when one is giving one's attention to any particular subject incidents occur which would, perhaps, pass unobserved but for the fact that at the actual moment one's mind is on the alert for anything that touches on that subject. So it

happened that when I was pondering on hotels and hotel life I went to stay with some friends officially posted at a stopping-place between Africa and home, and when I heard the petulant exclamation, in answer to a husband's remonstrance anent continual grumbling: 'How can you expect me to like an hotel after having just left a house of my own?' I thought: 'Here is a confirmation of what I have affirmed: hotels as homes are an impossibility.' One of the complaints was the inevitable and continual proximity of a dipsomaniac. 'My dear, that is an exaggerated name for the poor chap,' mildly suggested the husband. It was true he was never violently or blatantly intoxicated, she admitted; but, on the other hand, he was never sober, and his presence consequently was obnoxious. I confess I sympathised with the aggrieved lady. But that is, after all, the chief drawback to hotel life: you cannot choose your housemates. And to have the possibility of a drunken outburst hanging over one must be very trying. Yet so long as your fellow-guests keep within the limits of conventional decorum neither guest nor host has a right to request retirement.

A certain lady, however, who keeps an hotel in a foreign seaport town, allows no consideration by which ordinary mortals may be swayed to govern her if she desires to evict any of the temporary inmates of her house. During a short stay of about three months in this same town I heard of six different people having been evicted at different times. No further reason did she vouchsafe to any of them beyond saying that she required their rooms. She went so far, however, as to inform one of these recipients of her displeasure that 'She was no lady.' I had met the individual whose gentility was thus called into question, and she seemed to me as perfectly harmless and able to fulfil all the requirements necessary for the wide term of 'lady' to have applied to her without any particular incongruity. This arbitrary dame has secured the best site and the best situation in the town for her palatial inn, and her autocratic conduct receives apparent justification from the fact that her rooms are always full. I confess, however, that this reputation would make me hesitate to recommend my friends to stay with her; for on the conduct of none can I rely so implicitly as to persuade myself that under no circumstances could it possibly offend the wayward susceptibilities of this specialist in hotel demeanour. The possibility, too, of this lady's case not being

a unique instance of capricious crankiness would give one pause when contemplating the abandonment of the home in favour of the hotel.

That an 'Englishman's house is his castle' is a hackneyed but true saying, that calls to mind a Moorish proverb which affirms that 'A lion roars loudest in his own forest,' and which is less elegantly rendered by 'A cock crows shrillest on his own dungheap.' The sense of security is not the least attraction possessed by the freehold or leasehold; and it will be some time before any form of communal living will be adopted by the Britisher, no matter in what direction other nations may appear to be moving.

*THE ENGLAND OF ARTHUR YOUNG
AND COBBETT.¹*

MACAULAY has painted in vivid colours the England of the Restoration. There we may trust the brilliant rhetorician: his notes indicate the range of his research, and his imagination has filled in the probable details. In a memorable passage in the 'Essays' he describes how Burke had realised the India ruled by Warren Hastings. By similar methods and with no dissimilar qualities of genius Macaulay conjured up the England of the Stewarts. 'Out of darkness and dullness and confusion he had formed a multitude of vivid pictures. . . . His imagination animated and coloured them.' That is what he says of Burke. Making allowance for the man who describes what he never saw, we must accept Macaulay's pictures as equally and essentially truthful. On his broad canvas he dashes in the salient features of communities which had been slowly developing since the Conquest, and of scenery which had been rather modified than altered by the arts of peace and the progress of agriculture. A hundred years later Arthur Young travelled over the same ground in the body. Young may break down when he comes to generalisation, but he was the shrewdest and most exact of observers.

His facts have seldom been disputed, and they are buttressed with elaborate figures; and the England he perambulated from the Channel to the Cheviots had changed but little in the course of a century, as the England of the Stewarts was in most material respects the England of the Tudors. It was on the eve of the era of transformation. Impending wars with the colonies and France were to give an extraordinary impulse to agriculture and to stimulate home industries. By the co-operation of science and capital, under the spur of imperious necessity and the incitement of unfamiliar gains, stagnation was to be awakened to intense activity. It was with agriculture that Young was chiefly concerned. His travels, like those of St. Paul, were so many missionary journeys, and his purpose was to spread the light from his native county. Norfolk and the neighbouring shires were

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already models for imitation. It was in Norfolk that Lord Townshend, the brother-in-law of Walpole, after his quarrel with the imperious minister, had turned Cincinnatus and introduced the turnip. It was in Norfolk that Coke of Holkham, with rare audacity of enterprise, had converted sheep-walks and wastes into remunerative farms. The Norfolk farmers, under liberal landlords, with the new security of leases, had been encouraging inventors to improve the implements which had served the Saxons. They had been importing draught horses, fattening cattle with oil-cake, and fertilising their land by folding sheep. Their rental books showed that they had been richly rewarded.

Young's personal record had been far from satisfactory. He had twice tried farming, and twice failed. Sanguine to excess, he had ruined himself by experiments; but he contradicted Lord Beaconsfield's sneer at the critics in 'Lothair,' for as a critic he won a world-wide and lasting reputation. His works were translated into many languages, and he was welcomed to France by the landowners of the old *régime* as an unrivalled agrarian authority. The greatest of writers on English agriculture, he was a zealot and nearly a martyr to his favourite pursuit. When he buried his wife, the record he inscribed on the tombstone was that she was the great-great-granddaughter of the man who had been the first to make use of marl. The attempt that brought him to his first insolvency was farming three hundred acres with a capital of a thousand pounds. He sold the tenant-right for a hundred pounds to a successor who made a fortune. His first book was the narrative of a ride through the southern counties, where he had gone in search of a more profitable holding. He lighted on some land in Herts, which he afterwards described as 'a hungry, vitriolic gravel'—a wolf's jaw which devoured everything it swallowed. Most men would have been daunted and renounced agriculture in disgust. Young, with sublime self-assurance, set himself to teach others how to succeed. It would be difficult to overrate the benefits he conferred on his country. It was he who filled the granaries of the island when foreign importation was crippled or cut off. In those rides of his he was preparing England for the grapple with Napoleon. He roused up supine landlords, and in many cases doubled their incomes. He suggested new methods to tenants which enabled them to pay ever-rising rents. He carefully noted the practices of different districts, denouncing what was bad, developing and disseminating

what deserved imitation; and, though sometimes disarmed by overpowering hospitality, on the whole he wrote without fear or favour.

In all respects he was well equipped for these missions. Slight of figure and keen of face, he had a frame of steel and superabundant energy. A friend and a connection by marriage of the Burney family, he was a frequent visitor at the house in Queen Square. Fanny, in her early diaries, gives a pitiful account of his settled melancholy, when for the second time he found himself penniless. She feared his fortunes were hopelessly blighted; but, with all her insight into character, she did not know her man. Young had marvellous elasticity of spirit, though often oscillating between the depths and the heights. Once in the saddle he shook off his cares. Those keen dark eyes of his were roving everywhere, and he aided a retentive memory by constant recourse to his note-books. He interviewed landlord and farmer with the tact and incisiveness of a clever cross-examining counsel. His geniality and flow of anecdote made him welcome everywhere: he travelled with the best introductions, and was passed on from parish to parish and from the manor to the castle. Like Cobbett, he trusted much to hospitality, and seldom troubled the inns; but whereas Cobbett sought entertainment with Radical farmers, Young was hand in glove with the landed aristocracy. Yet both talked indifferently with all classes as opportunity served, and so between them we have continuous pictures of England through half a century of rapid transition.

Cobbett was still the grown-up waggoner's boy: rough of manner as of speech, a 'Peter Porcupine'—it was his *nom de plume*—ready to bristle on slight provocation. Young was a smooth and soft-spoken man of the world, addicted to foppery. Fanny Burney remembers his coming for a morning call, 'most absurdly dressed, being in light blue embroidered with silver, a bag and sword, and walking in the rain,' for it was a time when his shillings were scarce. We have wondered how he reconciled his toilette to his vanity, when, carrying his scanty wardrobe in saddle-bags, he was entertained at an Alnwick or a Raby. But the airs of the fine gentleman were affectations of which he could divest himself as easily as of his muddy overalls, and in his zeal for the information he sought he rose superior to light afflictions. He was as much in advance of his age in his love for the Beautiful as in his keen practical intelligence. Pennant in

his travels is prosaic; Johnson in his 'Tour to the Hebrides,' as a thorough cockney, dwells on the gloom and horror of the Highland scenery. Young, like Gray and Cobbett, was a passionate admirer of Nature in her coquettish aspects, and admired a fine landscape or a brawling waterfall almost as much as a noble field of swedes. The pity is that in travelling at home he was apt at first to be severely business-like and to take the charms of England for granted. In his tours in the Eastern Shires, he scarcely pays Nature a compliment, perhaps because he found her lacking in expression, or more probably because he had there been familiar with her face. In those rides there were no elements of surprise. In the Southern Counties—among the picturesque woodlands of Hants, on the breezy downs of Wilts, and in the scented fir-woods of Dorset—he introduces her incidentally in footnotes. And there he begins to do the gentlemen's seats—to borrow a phrase from Moore's satire on 'Rokeby' in the 'Twopenny Postbag.' There he shows some imperfect appreciation of art by cataloguing the pictures in family galleries, for he was the first to discover those hidden treasures which were revealed to the nation in the first Manchester Exhibition.

But it was in his perambulation of the North that he was excited to genuine admiration of scenery. The unexpected met him at every turn. It was no longer a tour, but a journey of discovery. He was as much startled by the rugged solitudes of the Yorkshire dales as Mungo Park when he struck the mighty volume of the upper waters of the Niger. He delights in describing the unexplored for untravelled readers who knew nothing of it. Had he been gifted with Scott's poetic genius and temperament he might have anticipated the author of 'Rokeby' by forty years in making the fortunes of innkeepers and postmasters and setting fashionable England on the move. He stood entranced in equal admiration as he looked down on the meeting of the waters where Greta flows into Tees. Speaking of the landscapes between Barnard Castle and the falls of that romantic river, he says: 'I never yet travelled such a line of country, so astonishingly fine, containing so noble a variety.' But Young had neither leisure to loiter nor inclination to listen to such legends as that of Ralph of Rokeby and the Felon Sowe. Business must be attended to, and his business was to note the progress of inclosures and the possibilities of turning moors into pasture and corn land, as to which, by the way, he was extravagantly sanguine.

His early English Tours are written with a definite purpose: they are dry, to the point and statistical. It seems soon to have begun to dawn upon him that the æsthetic and romantic digressions were interesting a wider public. He needed money; he desired popularity, and he was quick to learn the lesson. His travels in France and Italy are delightful reading, and the English volumes suffer by comparison. It is not only that in his France he has stereotyped the fresh impressions of an acute observer on the pre-revolutionary *régime*, so soon to be engulfed in the impending convulsions. He condescends to trivial gossip, he growls at the squalor of one filthy inn and praises the cuisine and accommodation of another. He lightens the weary road by reflections which he notes in his diary of an evening. A welcome guest with the La Rochefoucaulds and other grand seigneurs, he records conversations which profoundly interested him with the minuteness of a Boswell; and when he is struck by the grim feudal strength of such a frowning Stammschloss as that of the Polignacs, blending its dark towers with the basalt on which they are built, he records his impressions with the verve of a Dumas.

We may regret that he was not as much of the dilettante in describing contemporary England; but though, had he done so, we should have been more entertained, we should hardly have been better informed. For, directly or indirectly, he gives us all essential facts as to the state of the country and the conditions of society in all ranks, and enables us to gauge the progress when Cobbett went on his 'Rural Rides.' The advance in general prosperity had been amazing, though when Cobbett made his perambulations it was suffering a severe relapse. The nation had profited by the misfortunes of its neighbours, and, while escaping the horrors of a revolution, had laid the revolutionary lessons to heart. The American war and the struggle with Napoleon had compelled it to develop its resources, and in a measure to become self-supporting. Here, indeed, there had been a revolution; but it was a revolution in agricultural methods. An amazing impulse had been given to home industries: energy and enterprise were everywhere on the alert. Even the lavish and often wasteful expenditure which subsidised half Europe for twenty years, and which Cobbett, when turned Radical, so savagely abused, had not been without its compensations. No one expressed himself so emphatically on that point as Muffling, the enlightened Prussian. Above all, the nation, under pressure of

the common danger, had been fused into solidity. Shut up in the little island in a state of siege, social distinctions were in a great degree obliterated; and, in spite of the taxes, the poor rates, and the pressgangs, the country had been so extraordinarily enriched as to bear up under its financial burdens.

In 1770, even among men of birth and high social standing, divisions and castes were as strongly marked as in the France of the old *régime*. There were still Squires Western, who lived like their fathers, hunting their scratch packs, dining at noon, drinking hard, keeping open table for boon companions and dependants. They had never made the journey to town—a costly and tedious business in those days—and they had little in common with the knight of the shire who represented them at St. Stephen's, or with neighbours who kept pace with the times and had informed themselves by foreign travel. Before Napoleon closed the Continent the grand tour was indispensable as a part of education to the man of fashion. When Young went on his Travels the contrasts were great when he lighted upon some oasis of refinement, sometimes in remote districts which had been imperfectly reclaimed from barbarism. For example, he devotes many pages to the natural and artificial beauties of Duncombe Park in Yorkshire. The enlightened proprietor had called the landscape gardener into counsel, and in laying out his picturesque grounds had been guided by the tastes of Louis the Great or his electoral imitator at Wilhelmshöhe. Ionic temples, modelled after Tivoli or Paestum, looked down on falls of the brawling becks, which recalled the mad plunge of Anio or Velino. All over England at varying intervals he came on similar evidences of cultivated taste, though the taste was often false and the parodies of the originals grotesque. The marvel is that these progressive men were as conservative in their agricultural methods as the most stolid yeoman, even when their personal interests were deeply concerned. Young dwells at length on the exceptions, but they were not many. Yet the profits of judicious outlay in these exceptional cases might well have come home to the meanest intelligence, and he laboured indefatigably to spread the light. As a rule, all the travelled men of fashion were dipped in debt. They gambled in the clubs and coffee-houses of St. James's, and when they imitated the æsthetic caprices of a Horace Walpole they met the expenses with mortgages. We know not what were the habits of the Squire of Duncombe, but in the management of

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his estate he seems to have been as primitive as his peasant neighbours in the dales, who hauled home their meagre crops on tumble-cars and regarded the natives of the next valley as strangers and foreigners. Young declares that all the Duncombe tenants might have paid double rent; that the husbandry was universally bad; that the farmers were 'a poor, wretched set of people.' In fact, they were rather cottiers than farmers, for few holdings were rented higher than twenty pounds. It is remarkable that at the date of his visit the district had actually been retrograding. Whole tracts which had yielded good crops thirty years before were now overrun with whins and brambles. He adds that the low rents encouraged slovenly cultivation. Before the close of the century the Berlin and Milan decrees and the Orders in Council had applied the spur with a vengeance. As to land that was obviously arable, events fully justified his strictures and prophecies. But as he is always over-sanguine as to the possibilities of forestry, so he is never to be trusted as to the reclamation of wastes. As he rides eastward through wide stretches of barren moorland, he foresees the day when all will be under the plough; and, talking to Mr. Danby, of Swinton, an improving landlord, he recommends the reclamation of many thousand acres of contiguous moor and moss. He quotes with approbation the remark of an intelligent cottier: 'Improvement, sir? There is not an acre but might be made as good land as a man could wish to farm.' Yet the owners of these wilds in the present day have to content themselves with breeding grouse instead of filling rickyards.

But all great reformers have been sanguine, and Young had a boundless field before him for practicable and profitable work. A less resolute pioneer of progress might have renounced his efforts in despair. It is difficult now to realise the backward condition of the country when George, 'the Farmer King,' came to the throne. Half of England was either leased in small holdings or farmed in common, like the most backward townlands of the Scottish border. As each member of the village community changed annually his 'rigs' by lot, there was no possibility of improvement. In many districts there were no inclosures, and the children were told off to herd the cattle. Leases had only been tentatively introduced: the tenant had no security of tenure, and might have to quit on six months' notice. It says much for the good feeling and good faith of the con-

tracting parties that any enterprising farmer sank money under such conditions. If many landlords were unintelligent, most tenants were absolutely illiterate and stolidly wedded to time-honoured prejudices and practices. The waste of horse-power was scandalous: it was nothing uncommon in level southern districts to see four or six horses harnessed to the plough. Sometimes there were mixed teams of horses and oxen: often bullocks were yoked in a solemn procession. The plough and other implements were primitive as in the times of the Tudors, and it is curious to note the diagrams of new patents which Young recommended as ingenious improvements. Sheep were never folded. Though turnips and mangolds had been introduced in Norfolk by Lord Townshend in the middle of the century, the culture had scarcely spread beyond the eastern counties, and Young did more to extend it than any man.

The stagnation was largely due to imperfect communications. Away from the great towns, and Norwich then ranked almost second to London, there were none but local markets. So beef and mutton—and bad was the best—sold at 3*d.* a pound on the average, though the peasant would seldom indulge in anything beyond a scrap of bacon. The roads had scarcely improved since Pepys and his wife in their grand new coach went far astray between Portsmouth and London. Young says of the great northern highway between Stanage and Hitchin, ‘Twelve as villainous miles as any creature can ever fear travelling:’ and of the much frequented road from Newport Pagnell to Bedford, ‘a cursed string of hills and holes . . . a causeway is here and there thrown up, but so high and at the same time so very narrow, that it was at the peril of our necks we passed a waggon.’ No wonder that ideas were slowly diffused, and that country gentlemen with no love for the dissipations of London seldom hazarded the journey to town. At that time all able-bodied men whose time was valuable, or who could not afford a coach and six, rode like Young between a pair of saddlebags. Carlisle of Inveresk, with his literary friends Robertson, Wedderburn, John Home, and the Adams, jogged up on horseback from Edinburgh on their frequent visits to the metropolis, and Lord Monboddo when a septuagenarian took the same ride almost annually.

Capital was as scarce and as hard to come by as when Cobbett complained of rural England groaning under the war debt when the war taxes remained, but the war prices had gone. The

common labourers were miserably paid, though in Wilts and Hants the wages had again fallen as low in Cobbett's rides. Beer was far cheaper than in Cobbett's time, when the quart pot had risen from three halfpence to fourpence. But both Young and Cobbett bitterly denounce the luxury and senseless extravagance of the poorest classes. 'They all drink tea, and twice a day,' says Young; and we know what tea and sugar cost in those days. They all drink tea, says Cobbett of the Wiltshire labourers, when they were eking out bare subsistence on parochial doles. It is interesting to remember that Scott makes the same observation when he visited the Shetlands in 1814. The Shetlanders were scarcely better housed than the inhabitants of the Fair Isle, who kept common house in their hovels with their cattle, pigs and poultry; but they all drank tea nevertheless. Labour in some districts was scarce, with the calls of the war, and especially on the seaboard, where pressgangs were active. Nevertheless wages did not respond to the ordinary laws of supply and demand, and yet the abuses were flagrant. The Sussex farmers, in the neighbourhood of Sheffield Place, the seat of the Holroyds, were shrewd enough to throw half their labour bills on the parish. They paid weekly allowances from the rates to their labourers in full strength and regular employment, and took the growing lads as apprentices with parochial allowances of two shillings a week. That was perhaps an excessive case, but similar abuses were common.

Fifty eventful years had elapsed before Cobbett followed Young. England, after being amazingly enriched, had been temporarily embarrassed and impoverished. The complaints of agricultural depression were as bitter then as now. The rents of the war time were ruining the farmers. The rickyards before the season's harvests were empty, for farmers had to sell from hand to mouth. Pastures and commons that had been broken up for corn land were being abandoned and overgrown with weeds. Sheep and cattle, after being fattened for a year or two, often barely fetched their original prices. In most parishes the poor rates were enormous, and the abuses were even greater than when Young exposed them. Above all, landlords and tenants alike were losing hope. It was in these circumstances that Cobbett made his tours, and his comments must be accepted with large allowances for his peculiar temperament and ingrained prejudices. He was, perhaps, even a keener and closer observer than Young,

and like Young he delights in calculations and figures, though he does not burden his book with tabular statements. But he saw only a single aspect of each question ; all his sympathies were on the side of the labourers, and if effect could have been given to his impracticable specifics, it would have been the subversion of society and of social order.

Young was a man who knew his own mind : a theorist who travelled with a definite object. Cobbett had any number of irons in the fire : he mixed up politics or faction with agriculture : the best of haters, he could see no good in statesmen who looked beyond the parish to the empire. Like Mr. Gladstone, the purpose of his preaching was to set the masses against the classes, though it should be remembered to his credit that once, on the appeal of a minister, he did his best to calm the agitation he had fostered. Like Mr. Gladstone, he believed profoundly in his own infallibility, though he had boxed the whole political compass in his time, and changed his opinions more than once, if he stuck conservatively to his costume. He had denounced the French Revolution and all its works ; he had put himself forward as the Transatlantic champion of Crown and Church when the revolutionary Priestley sought refuge in America ; he came back from America a convinced Radical, bringing the body of Tom Paine with his baggage, for the honours of a public funeral. He had accepted the patronage of Wyndham and dined with Pitt, yet he never wearied of denouncing their war policy. We say he could not see beyond the parish. In abusing the ministers, the war debt, the barracks, the batteries, the martello towers, the semaphores, and the overgrown fleet, he seems never to have realised that for twenty years England had been fighting for dear existence ; that had Napoleon made these islands so many French departments, the lot of his labourer-friends would have been still more lamentable ; that if Britain had lost the command of the seas, the liberty he advocated would have been a thing of the past, and in place of the emigration he condemned, her life-blood would have been drained by conscription.

He was as short-sighted as he was quick-sighted, and compounded of inconsistencies and contradictions. Intensely sympathetic and violently aggressive, he was a master of passionate vituperation. The fault from a critical point of view is that the invective is monotonous. When he fancies he has made a hit he sticks to it, and so he never names London otherwise than as

the Wen. He was a sensible man at bottom, and we can imagine his smiling afterwards—in calmer moments—over his savage denunciations and unbridled outbursts. He denounces the Universities as ‘dens of dunces,’ and as he had taught himself, he had no opinion of public schools. He far prefers his own training in tying bines in the hop gardens and scaring crows from the wheat, to that of Winchester and Westminster, which turns out ‘frivolous idiots.’ The editors of the leading journals are caitiffs and villains; and even the sight of sterile soil provokes his vehement indignation, and he cannot forgive it for being unproductive. Windsor Forest is ‘as villainous a heath as ever man set eyes on.’ Windsor Park is ‘a blackguard soil.’ Villainous, spewy land is a very favourite expression. The great naval arsenal of Portsmouth is ‘the scene of all that is wicked and odious,’ its population is ‘a hellish assemblage.’ The waggoner’s boy has little of the delicacy and nothing of the chivalry of the gentleman. He revels in personalities. He poisons his barbed shafts with scandalous village gossip and works them about in the wound. A tragic death cannot abate his rancorous malignity: he heaps dishonour on the grave of an unfortunate Mr. Birkbeck, and again and again refers in brutal terms to Lord Castlereagh’s melancholy suicide. But we hasten to repeat that there is another side to his character. The best excuse for his virulence is the down-trodden condition of his class, and it must be said that he stood manfully by his order. Sevenpence a day for the head of the hovel and a weekly gallon loaf for each member of the family! that touched him to the heart and fed the flames of a fiery indignation that was always smouldering. A little incident reveals the man as he was. He had ridden through a long day after an early breakfast and was an hungered. He got some bread and cheese at a cottage—a snack to serve him till supper. And as he soothed if he did not satisfy his appetite, he remembers that chronic semi-starvation is the habitual lot of the hospitable peasant, and of those whose battle he is fighting in a fashion of his own. He grudges the expenses of inns, and generally billets himself on his admirers; but his hand is always in his pocket when he has been listening to a tale of distress. In his flourishing days, in his Hampshire home at Botley he kept open house for all and sundry; and it is to his honour that when he failed for over 30,000*l.* no man was more generously treated by his creditors.

In his alternating savagery and softness he reminds us of

blustering Lawrence Boythorne and the tiny canary. His bark was much worse than his bite. He could make tardy reparation for a hasty wrong, as, after severely lashing, in his 'Register,' some unlucky Sussex farmers, he admits that he had become 'heavy-handed' with flogging hardened offenders. A helpless child moves him to tenderness; and he has always a sharp eye for a pretty girl. Nothing appealed to him more strongly than beauty in rags. And though no one could be more bitter on the laws that bore heavily on poachers, he was a thorough Englishman in his sporting tastes. At Botley he kept a kennel of thirty dogs, all well bred. One of the brightest recollections of his boyhood was following the harriers on foot; and he never missed a chance of coursing or hare-hunting. Arthur Young congratulates the islanders of Wight on their being cursed with no foxes. 'There is too often reason to doubt,' he says, 'whether the animal that flees or the brute that pursues is the greater beast of the two.' Cobbett, on the contrary, laments the decline of the sport, and notes as an ominous sign of the times that four packs out of five had been put down in a southern district. He heard of 'an acre of hares' on Mr. Beach's Gloucestershire estates; he made a pilgrimage to see it, and was greatly gratified. There is not a word as to the ravages on the crops. Possibly Mr. Beach bred his hares on the home farm. Yet with characteristic inconsistency, Cobbett would have abolished the game laws and the law of trespass; and, anticipating or surpassing Sir William Harcourt's proscriptive legislation, the hare would now have been as extinct as the bustard.

Although for long he had his home in Kensington, he was essentially a man of the country. He was passionately in love with its beauties, and had the soul and spirit of a great painter. The brush of Turner has scarcely depicted cloud effects more tellingly than the pen of the scurrilous writer of the 'Register.' When the sun is breaking through in bright though ephemeral gleams he delights in the drizzle which drenches him to the skin. The 'Rides' open on the very first page with a powerful description of a fog on the Berkshire downs. It recalls a similar scene in Pennsylvania.

Looking over a hill in this valley early in the morning, it presented one of the most beautiful sights my eyes ever beheld. It was a sea bordered with beautifully formed trees of endless varieties of colours. As the hills formed the outlines of the sea, some of the trees showed only their tops; and every now and then a

lofty tree growing in the sea itself raised its head above the apparent waters. Except the setting sun sending his horizontal beams through all the varieties of reds and yellows of the branches of the trees in Long Island, and giving at the same time a sort of silver crest to the verdure beneath them, I have never seen anything so beautiful as the foggy valley of the Wysihicken.

These pictures show his imaginative analysis, the blending of facts with an emotional fancy which characterised his writings of every kind. With him all roads led to Rome, and before he is out of the fog, returning from the heavens to the earth, he is back in his favourite politics. They will intrude themselves everywhere, like King Charles in Mr. Dick's memorial. Nothing in the scenery of the South struck him more forcibly than the valley of the Wiltshire Avon, but he turns from descanting on its transcendent attractions to his habitual wail on the dwindling of the rural population, and launches out in invective on its causes, in contempt of historical facts. He had read White's 'Selborne' with pleasure, and made a special pilgrimage to the parish, after skirting it more than once. He is enchanted with the charms which White had not exaggerated. 'Nothing can surpass in beauty those hills and hillocks and hangers. . . . The churchyard is most beautifully situated. The land is good all about it. The trees are luxuriant.' But he found to his sorrow, or satisfaction, that there were snakes in that Eden. For once in his 'Rides' he fancied that he had happened upon rural felicity.

As I was coming into this village I observed to a farmer that people ought to be happy here. His answer was that he did not believe there was a more unhappy place in England, for quarrels of one sort or another were always going on.

In fact, Cobbett constantly reminds us of Sir Mungo Malagrowth; he enjoys against the grain and is never so pleased as when he is growling. We are sure, if his eye for beauty was not often blinded by his prejudices, at least he squinted. Marlborough is 'a villainous place,' and the park and domain of Lord Aylesbury are 'uncommonly ugly.' But he had just been compassionating the Wiltshire labourers, and the burst of spite is explained in the next sentence. His Lordship had been adding park to park and manor to manor; he had swallowed wholesale some hundred small farms. Richard Jefferies in 'Hodge and his Masters' gives a very different idea of Fleeceborough and its environs. The burden of the complaint is that small farms had been swallowed in an ornamental domain, but it may be remarked that Cobbett

and Young were diametrically opposed on that question. Young advocated large farms, where capital could be profitably invested and labour encouraged by costly inventions. Consequently Cobbett was all for small holdings, which not only bred independent yeomen, but, as he was convinced, gave greater employment and higher wages to labourers.

Marlborough may have been 'a villainous place,' and Cobbett estimates that the wages of the Wiltshire labourers had fallen by nearly a third since Young compassionated them. Talking of parishes in Wilts like Little Langford and Sharncut, reported by their clergymen as containing populations respectively of twenty and of eight, he indulges in a jeremiad over 'a decaying and mouldering country.' But riding through the meadows of the Severn and along the sunny banks of the Wiltshire Avons, he is moved to bless where he had begun to curse. The change since Young travelled had been marvellous. Those meadows must always have carried rich pasturage, but now the number of sheep and cattle that covered them was 'prodigious.' Young had remarked on scraggy beasts in poor condition: Cobbett admired sleek cattle of the Hereford breed, 'certainly the finest and most beautiful of all.' In fact, Wiltshire had been bringing in stock from Hereford, and a similar process of selection of the fittest had been going on all over the kingdom. The improvement in the sheep, both in flesh and wool, was at least as remarkable, and foreign strains had been imported from distant districts.

Nothing of the sort could have been done without the liberal encouragement and spirited example of wealthy landlords. Self-interested they naturally were, but in helping themselves they helped their tenants. Yet Cobbett declares that 'of all the mean, all the cowardly reptiles that ever crawled on the face of the earth, the *English landowners* are the most mean and the most cowardly.' The italics are his. The essential of such progress was the introduction of capital. New men had been buying out the mortgaged or beggared landowners, and wherever they had bought a manor there was a corresponding increase of prosperity. That he admits, for he always desires to be honest. Yet he has a bitter grievance against the Barings, who 'had been adding tract to tract,' and his gall is still more stirred by the Ricardos, who were enriched by finance, and had just made 60,000*l.* on the Greek Loan. It was those 'stockjobbers' who were preying on the vitals of the people: apparently he would have had them, like

the unprofitable servant, wrap their ill-gotten gains in a napkin, and even the charity of one member of the Baring family is insufficient to cover the inexpressible sin. His ire comes to a climax when he visits Cheltenham. He had just been admiring 'the endless flocks and herds,' and wondering 'where the meat went to.' The problem is solved when he sees the fashionable watering-place, a ready market for all the local produce. Here at least he might have felt that good was brought out of evil. But not a bit of it. He execrates the congregation of East India plunderers, West India floggers, English tea-gorgers, with gluttons, drunkards, and debauchees of all descriptions.

When I enter a place like this, I always feel disposed to squeeze up my nose with my fingers; and I conceive that every two-legged creature that I see coming near me is about to cover me with the poisonous proceeds of its impurities.

His vigorous epithets are characteristic synonyms for the soldiers, civilians, and merchants who had been building up the empire. But Cobbett's ideal was a self-contained and self-supplying England, and had he survived to see the Corn Laws abolished, he would have assuredly been in a strait between resentment at foreign underselling and satisfaction at the cheapening of the loaf.

Never was there such a *laudator temporis acti*. The fluent and fiery Radical was still the reactionary Tory. With the signs of progress and prosperity staring him in the face, he sees everywhere 'indubitable marks of decay.' It seems to have been his fixed idea that the population was stagnating if not retrograding, and the most carefully compiled statistics never convinced him to the contrary. He heaps ridicule on the facts and figures of Smith and McCulloch, of the Scotch 'feelosophers' and of the professional statisticians. If Young is apt to break down in his generalisations, Cobbett generalises from ludicrous premisses. Beneath the hills dividing Hants from Berks, he finds 'eleven churches in a string, in about fifteen miles, the chancels of which would contain a great many more than all the inhabitants, men, women, and children.' There the population had undeniably dwindled, but he argues that a similar process had been going on everywhere, and never seeks to fathom the causes. Surveying the numerous churches in Norfolk, he makes no allusion to the sweeping mortality of the Black Death, so picturesquely emphasised by Dr. Jessopp, from which rural East Anglia had never

recovered. He makes no allowance for the collapse of the feudal system, when the strength of the over-lord was in the vassals he could muster, or for the more gradual growth of industries which congregated the working men in towns. He is eloquent on the munificence and magnificent works of our Catholic forefathers, but he takes no note of the effects of piety or superstition, of the ecclesiastical propaganda of the enormously wealthy monkish fraternities, or of the death-beds of sinners who sought to buy redemption by propitiating the keepers of the keys of hell and of death. He is always abusing 'the Wen,' but the growth of the Wen might have explained away half his difficulties. The metropolis was only the greatest agglomeration among many. From Liverpool to Plymouth, from the Tyne to the Thames, capital concentrating in the cities had been exercising magnetic attraction. The Norwich of Young, which had ranked with Bristol, had now shrunk relatively to an insignificant provincial town. He seems to have thought that in the wars of the Roses, when the sword and the pestilence did their deadly work, men 'grew spontaneous,' like the dragon's teeth or Mark Tapley's buildings in swampy Eden. More often a sceptic, if not an infidel, he takes for gospel all the old chroniclers record of the Conqueror's ravages when he made his 'New Forest.' Yet, forgetting himself, in another passage he remarks: 'A poorer spot than this New Forest there is not in all England; nor, I believe, in the whole world. It is more barren and miserable than Bagshot Heath.' We doubt if the soil has degenerated since the Conquest. There he was looking at it with the farmer's eye, grudgingly admitting there were spots which might repay cultivation. But hear the lover of Nature elsewhere, remarking on the lights in the forest glades, on the deer and the wild swine, the pines and the wood cattle. William Howitt is not more eloquent or enthusiastic. William Stewart Rose, whom, by the way, he abuses, was not more inspired with the poetry of the historic scenery. Here is one passage among many:

Down almost every little valley that divides the hills or hillocks, there is more or less of water, making the undergrowth in these parts very thick and dark to go through; and these form the most delightful contrast with the fields and lawns. There are innumerable vessels of various sizes upon the water' (he was looking from Beaulieu over Southampton Water), 'and to those that delight in water scenes, this is certainly the very prettiest place I ever saw in my life.'

As a logical sequence to the lamentable depletion of the rural

districts, he laments the decline of fairs. There the author of 'Tom Brown's Schooldays' would have been inclined to agree with him. The shop, in Cobbett's opinion, tempted the rustic to the town and its wasteful extravagances.

Wens have devoured market towns and villages : shops have devoured markets and fairs, and this too, to the infinite injury of the most numerous classes of the people. Shopkeeping, merely as shopkeeping, is injurious to every community.

What would he have said to the spread of co-operation, to trusts, and to the universal providers, which threaten to swallow all their pigmy neighbours ? But he proceeds to explain, and had he written a few centuries before, there would have been common sense in his argument.

When fairs were very frequent shops were not needed. A manufacturer of shoes, of stockings, of hats, of almost anything man wants, could manufacture at home in an obscure hamlet, with cheap house rent, fresh air, and plenty of room. . . . By attending four or five or six fairs in the year, he sold the work of his hands, unloaded with heavy expense, &c.

And, again, he generalises from a single instance, enlivening his argument with the story of how he bought a whip at Weyhill Fair for half the price that he paid to a Salisbury saddler. But we imagine Wyndham or Castlereagh would have been puzzled had they had to contract with villagers for army clothing for the Walcheren expedition or the Peninsular war, and even the bowmen who fought at Crecy or Agincourt must have got their Lincoln green from the looms of cities. It is only fair to add that his eyes are being opened when he pushes his Rides into the coal and iron districts of the north. At Sheffield, he notes with pride and satisfaction that it turns out nine-tenths of the knives of the world ; the forges of his village blacksmiths could hardly have done so much. And he is equally loud in patriotic praise of the woollen manufactures of Leeds.

Were Cobbett to return to resume his Rides, no doubt he would enjoy himself as much as ever. He might growl away to his heart's content, among other things, at the growth of the millionaire, bloated beyond his wildest fears, and the growing migration of the labourer from country to city. But he would have to own that the class he championed had profited beyond all others by the progress of eighty years. The wages of the labourer have been rapidly advancing, while there has been a corresponding fall in the price of his necessities or luxuries. In Wilts and Dorset, Young and Cobbett spoke of starvation wages, eked out by paro-

chial doles. Now the weekly earnings in those counties average fifteen shillings; in the northern counties the average is over a pound; and whereas the clodhopper used to kennel in a hovel, now for the most part—though in some places there is overcrowding—he is housed in a decent cottage. Nowadays many a city clerk and poor vicar must envy the lot of the agricultural labourer who is selling his work and time in a rising market.

ALEXANDER INNES SHAND.

WASPS.

It was as a small boy in pinafores that I first found wasps an interesting subject for investigation. A nest in the thatch of the cowshed provoked an inquiry with the end of a long pole, and I learnt with dismay that wasps have a very clear notion of cause and effect, while a sharp prick on the lid of my left eye, followed by a temporary blindness, made it painfully clear to my juvenile mind that they have also sight and sense. My early acquaintance was thus intimate rather than friendly.

Similar wisdom is gained by many other young animals in their endeavours to provide themselves with meals at the cost of the wasps; it is not by instinct but by bitter experience that young birds and other insectivorous creatures learn that wasps are best left severely alone. The lesson is, however, learnt once for all by each individual, nor needs repeating; thenceforth to the expert a yellow and black coat of arms bears the legend, *Noli me tangere*. Such a wholesome respect do these warriors engender in their foes that many an unarmed weakling dons the same colours, adopts the same gait and gestures, and passes as one bearing dangerous weapons. Flies, beetles, caterpillars, moths, saw-flies, all contribute to the band of impostors, though some of these, it is true, do possess flavours and odours that are genuine safeguards. It is remarkable how the dangerous and the unsavoury insects are leagued together under a common flag and in the same uniform; almost without exception they are yellow and black or red and black. The mutual advantage is obvious. An insectivorous enemy has but one or two patterns to learn, and the whole company is freed from further molestation, the loss by experimental tasting being shared fairly evenly among the species in the colour-alliance.

The true wasps, of whom the hornet is one, are distinguished from mud-wasps, sand-wasps, and other wasps so-called by their social habits and the existence of workers in addition to the males and females. The hornet, of course, is at once recognisable by his great size and the red-brown bands upon the body. The other six species of social wasps that occur in Britain differ from one another chiefly in their faces; you may recognise them as

you do your friends by the contour and complexion of the features ; some have long faces, others short and round ; this one hirsute, that smooth ; some faces are more yellow than black, others the reverse, and so on. A complete enumeration is unnecessary, but I may mention that the worker that has a yellow streak on the first joint of the antenna is worth tracking home, for the nest will nearly always be found above ground suspended in a bush or tree, and most convenient for observation.

The life-history of one of these insect communities, terrestrial or arboreal, repays attention. In the warm days of early spring the queens may be seen flying along the hedgerows and banks seeking eligible building sites. A mousehole, a crevice in a wall, a chink between the roof-rafters, a tree twig, a half-buried tin pot, or even an old hat or boot may offer the desired conditions. The site once fixed, the queen sets to work laying the foundations of her palace. Paradoxically in so well-ordered an establishment she lays her foundation-stone in the roof, and thence builds downward, sowing the seed of her race in veritable hanging gardens plot by plot. The exact spot and its surroundings having been carefully surveyed and committed to memory, the queen sails forth to a neighbouring fence or post, and with strong jaws rasps off the thin pellicle of grey, weather-beaten stuff from the surface of the wood, stuff that has already parted with all that the rain can take from it, and is therefore weather-proof. Gathering her load into a small pellet moistened with liquid from her mouth, she returns home and plasters the wood-pulp paper on to some twig or rootlet at the top of the selected chamber. Again and again is the process repeated until a flat disc has been built ; from the centre of this a narrow stalk is constructed downwards, and on the end of the stalk there is fastened a second flat disc on whose lower surface about a dozen hexagonal cells, open below, are built ; round the whole are placed two bell-shaped envelopes to screen the comb from rain and wind. In each cell is fixed an egg, from which proceeds a white, uncomely grub, which by a providential arrangement in its external anatomy is prevented from falling headlong out of its bottomless pit. At night the queen curls herself round the stalk above the inverted bases of the cells, and this, no doubt, in a small degree shields her children from the cold ; by day she labours incessantly to supply them with food. Bountifully nourished, the grubs rapidly increase in size, casting their skins from time to time as the limits of

stretching are reached, until they fill up the entire space within the cell. When full-grown they spin a silken cocoon, which lines the cell, and for the first time affords a bottom to the cavity. An inert chrysalis stage follows, and in a few days the young worker-wasp bites her way out of her self-imposed prison, and prepares for the active duties of life.

Once provided with this little band of helpers the queen for ever stays at home, occupied solely with the business of depositing eggs in the cells prepared by their labours. The workers speedily construct new cells on the margins of the first tier until it becomes of sufficient diameter; threads and pillars of wasp-paper are now hung from it at intervals, and at the lower end of these a second tier of cells is suspended, and so on in quick succession until some eight or nine combs are, in a favourable season, completed. The development from egg to perfect insect occupies some three or four weeks, according to conditions of food supply and temperature, so that in a comparatively short time the army of workers increases from the initial dozen to a host several hundred strong, each of whose members is capable of acting in the manifold capacities of architect, builder, forager, scout, lancer or nurse. Small wonder that with so versatile and industrious a population the commonwealth flourishes; the greater the numbers the greater the possibilities of yet further increase. Each cell is no sooner vacated by a perfect wasp than it is at once made ready for the reception of another egg; hence the actual number of cells in a nest does not by any means represent the total of wasps in that family. Indeed, in a large nest, given a good season, there may well be as many as 60,000 individuals, and these all the offspring of but one queen.

The organic life of the nest is but little inferior to that of the hive-bee. The workers laden with their burdens of paper-pulp add cell to cell with unerring accuracy and economy of space, using their jaws first as rasps and saws, then as trowels, testing their work with their delicate antennæ, nicely adjusting the thickness of the walls, now and again measuring their distances with outstretched leg so as to have just sufficient room between the successive combs on the one hand and the outer casing on the other for the easy movement of the queen within the nest; all is orderly and methodical. Frequently, as the combs are enlarged in breadth, it becomes necessary to cut away the inner layers of the bell-shaped casing, and add fresh on the outer side

in order that the growing colony may have both ample accommodation and adequate protection against loss of heat, for the internal temperature of the nest in which so much energy is being expended is higher than that of the surroundings, and must be maintained for the due incubation of the eggs and growth of the young. The accuracy of the spacing is exquisite; there is just room for a big wasp to move between the various walls, but the curved upper surface of the body frequently comes in contact with the structure and gets scratched and rubbed, so that an old wasp can be recognised by a bald worn spot on its back. Herein too we see a reason for the peculiar disposition in rest of the front wing, which is in all wasps folded lengthways so as to reduce the width by one half; in this way the fragile hinder portion, so important as a propeller in flight and also as a means of linking the front and hind wings together, is prevented from overlapping the back and getting frayed against the walls, but lies safely ensconced along the sides of the insect.

The diet of wasps is of a very mixed character; sugar, ripe fruit, meat, fresh or otherwise, are attacked voraciously; scarcely anything animal or vegetable comes amiss. Their attendance in kitchens and pastrycooks' shops and their ravages in the orchard are but too well known. It is, however, not so generally realised that they rid our houses and gardens of many objectionable pests. They may often be seen hawking flies, seizing them on the wing with an audible snap of the jaws; the fishmonger welcomes them at his stall, for though they cut small pieces off his salmon, they clear his shop of the bluebottle flies, whose progeny would soon bring his goods into bad odour with the customers. Aphides, too, those prolific scourges of our rose-trees and other plants, are greedily taken: as I write the wasps are gathering black-fly from the cherry shoots outside the window. I have seen earwigs and white cabbage butterflies, not to mention hosts of small caterpillars, carried off by worker-wasps to their nests. As scavengers also they rival the ants and burying beetles in sanitary value; the dead body of any small animal is speedily stripped of skin and flesh by the cutting jaws and left a clean and inoffensive skeleton.

Some years ago during a plague of wasps I put out a dead mouse in order to see how soon it would be reduced to bare bones; by the end of the second day there was not a particle of flesh left, so freely had the wasps foraged and feasted upon it.

No doubt wasps, when very abundant, are injurious in many ways, yet on the whole they are to be regarded as friends and not ruthlessly exterminated.

How do wasps and bees which wander far afield in their expeditions find their way home again with such certainty? Undoubtedly they have, in common perhaps with all animals, wonderful memories; but it is probable that they also make careful note of the surroundings of the nest, and do not at their first flights travel far from the entry. I once had an opportunity of seeing how wasps take their bearings: a lucky accident revealed a nest in an old meat-tin that had been thrown into a ditch. Wishing to observe the operations somewhat more comfortably than was possible when prone in the ditch, I cautiously lifted the tin on to the bank, a distance of two or three yards. The wasps that were abroad at the moment of removal all came straight back to the old spot in the ditch, and were evidently perplexed at the absence of their nest, but after some search most of them discovered it in its new position. Those, however, which were within noticed, as soon as they came to the exit preparatory to taking flight, that a change had occurred and paused upon the threshold, looking about and waving their antennæ; then they took wing and hovered over the tin, flying to and fro in ever-increasing swings, noting carefully the exact surroundings; soon their oscillations brought them to the edge of the ditch, and then, all being here familiar, they dashed straight away. After an interval wasps began returning direct to the nest in its new position, and I have no doubt that these were the workers who had thus carefully noted the alteration when they emerged from their home.

This keen memory for places I have noticed in some of the burrowing solitary wasps which provision their subterranean cells with spiders. Fussy, bustling little creatures are these wasps, running hither and thither, and seldom flying, searching, whenever the sun is shining, for their victims. The spider, when found, is seized by the sickle-shaped jaws while the sting is driven home between the joints of the armour, injecting a poison which at once paralyses the muscles and puts an end to resistance. Now comes the work of carrying the spider home to the burrow which may be many yards away; and a serious work it is, for often the spider is many times heavier than the wasp. On a bright day last June I watched the whole performance as given by a hand-

some little black and red wasp living on one of the heaths so characteristic of south-west Surrey. When I first discovered it the wasp had hung the spider up on a heather twig while she herself scurried home to make a few arrangements within her burrow; presently she issued from the ground, ran straight to the spider without a moment's hesitation, seized it by its middle, and ran swiftly backward over the heather, dragging her prey with apparent ease; again did she leave it suspended in the heather—this I fancy to keep it out of the way of marauding ants that were swarming over the ground—and rush back to examine her front door. In her absence a gust of wind shook the heather and dislodged the spider, which fell on to some lower twigs and there stuck fast. Satisfied that all was well at home the wasp returned to the spot where she had left the spider, actually passing within an inch of the creature and yet not noticing it, so firm in her memory was the place in which she had last left it. Amazed at not finding it where she expected, she paused, and then ran a zigzag course, searching for her property; a few minutes' perseverance brought due reward and the spider was carried off to the mouth of the burrow, which I now noticed had been made far wider than was necessary for the delicate figure of the wasp, but exactly gave room for the fat body of the spider, which fitted it like a stopper. The wasp retreated backwards down the burrow, gripped the tip of the spider's body with her jaws and dragged him down below. After some time she reappeared, rested a while outside the hole, cleaning herself with scrupulous care, combing her back and wiping her antennæ till she was glossy and free from sand. Then with a sudden fury she scratched the loose sand into the burrow, filling it up and making the surface level so that no one could possibly detect the treasure house; not satisfied with what to me appeared perfect, she gathered a few dead heather-bells and carelessly strewed them about over the place so as to give the appearance of undisturbed soil. I caught the wasp, dug up the spider, which now had the wasp's egg fastened to it, and took them home to weigh them; the spider was just four times as heavy as the wasp. Some species of solitary wasps have even been seen to take a small pebble in their jaws and use it as a rammer to beat the soil firm after filling up the burrow. Such an act may surely be claimed as intelligent use of a tool. Other observers have remarked that the displacement of a leaf, or twig, or stone in the immediate neighbourhood of the victim discon-

certs the wasp more or less, proving that careful note of the surroundings has indeed been taken.

Whatever be the precise method in optics by which insects see—and the question is no easy one—there is no doubt that their vision and perception of colour are but little inferior to our own. A very striking instance of this came before me quite recently. A long hill, a hot sun, and a bank spangled with flowers had combined to make me dismount and push my bicycle. A Brimstone butterfly was also going up the hill, and I instinctively fell to watching him. He was visiting the pale-blue flowers of the dog-violet that were dotted in twos and threes here and there along the bank among the primroses, speedwells, and other flowers. I kept close to the butterfly for more than a quarter of a mile, yet only three dog-violet blossoms were passed over unvisited by him, and of these one was more than half hidden by a dead leaf. Considering that the violets were not in masses, but, as already mentioned, sparsely scattered along the bank, the direct manner in which the insect went to these and to no others, in spite of the blue speedwells not differing greatly in colour, argues a visual perception of a very high order.

To return to our social wasps. Towards the end of the summer, when the number of workers is great, the grubs get more plentifully nourished than were their elder sisters, and many of the resulting workers wax great in size and almost attain to the dignity of queens. So near is the approach that some lay eggs, which, however, are not fertilised, and give rise only to drones—that is, to males. It is a most remarkable fact that the queen can, apparently at will, lay unfertilised eggs producing drones, or fertilised eggs which give rise either to imperfect females, the workers, or to perfect females, the queens of the next season, the character of the food supplied determining whether any grub shall become maid-of-all-work or monarch. The combs built late in the season normally contain numerous larger cells, which are destined some for the next generation of queens, others for the short-lived drones. What a marvellous piece of heredity it is that the workers, themselves for the most part absolutely barren and descended from a queen who has herself never constructed other than worker-cells, are thus led instinctively to prepare for the perpetuation of the race. In August and September the drones are on the wing gathering nectar from the flowers for themselves alone. In appearance they

differ considerably from the workers or queens; their longer antennæ, narrower and longer wings, and more slender body render them at once recognisable to the trained eye, while the welcome absence of sting will enable anyone who is not afraid to risk his own *corpus vile* to identify the harmless, idle male. The nuptials are celebrated late in the season, and thereupon the males perish. Of the rest of the vast community, the newly wedded and speedily widowed queens alone survive the winter. The rains and winds of autumn soon put an end to the busy workers, though I have seen them about so late as the last week of November. The queens, sole hope of the race, hide themselves in thatched roofs, under moss, behind bark, in folds of curtains—anywhere, in short, where they are likely to secure shelter from storm and cold. Safe in their retreat, they lay hold of their support with their jaws and their six hooked feet, fold their delicate wings beneath the body, and enter on a long sleep, from which they are awaked only by the warm days of returning spring. I have seen queen wasps flying as early as February 7; but this is unusually early, and probably a disastrous occurrence. Hibernation once set in, they are capable of withstanding intense cold; hence a severe and prolonged winter does not diminish their numbers; but if unseasonable warmth should stimulate them into life they are likely to fall victims to succeeding cold and rain, so that a changeable spring, especially if wet, is generally followed by a summer comparatively free from these sometimes too attentive friends of man.

OSWALD H. LATTER.

*THE FOUR FEATHERS.*¹

BY A. E. W. MASON.

CHAPTER XXV.

LIEUTENANT SUTCH COMES OFF THE HALF-PAY LIST.

AT the time when Calder, disappointed at his failure to obtain news of Feversham from the one man who possessed it, stepped into a carriage of the train at Assouan, Lieutenant Sutch was driving along a high white road of Hampshire across a common of heather and gorse; and he too was troubled on Harry Feversham's account. Like many a man who lives much alone, Lieutenant Sutch had fallen into the habit of speaking his thoughts aloud. And as he drove slowly and reluctantly forward, more than once he said to himself, 'I foresaw there would be trouble. From the beginning I foresaw there would be trouble.'

The ridge of hill along which he drove dipped suddenly to a hollow. Sutch saw the road run steeply down in front of him between forests of pines to a little railway station. The sight of the rails gleaming bright in the afternoon sunlight, and the telegraph poles running away in a straight line until they seemed to huddle together in the distance, increased Sutch's discomposure. He reined his pony in and sat staring with a frown at the red-tiled roof of the station building.

'I promised Harry to say nothing,' he said; and drawing some makeshift of comfort from the words, repeated them, 'I promised faithfully in the Criterion grill-room.'

The whistle of an engine a long way off sounded clear and shrill. It roused Lieutenant Sutch from his gloomy meditations. He saw the white smoke of an approaching train stretch out like a riband in the distance.

'I wonder what brings him,' he said doubtfully; and then with an effort at courage, 'Well, it's no use shirking.' He flicked the pony with his whip and drove briskly down the hill. He reached the station as the train drew up at the platform. Only two pas-

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sengers descended from the train. They were Durrance and his servant, and they came out at once on to the road. Lieutenant Sutch hailed Durrance, who walked to the side of the trap.

'You received my telegram in time, then?' said Durrance.

'Luckily it found me at home.'

'I have brought a bag. May I trespass upon you for a night's lodging?'

'By all means,' said Sutch, but the tone of his voice quite clearly to Durrance's ears belied the heartiness of the words. Durrance, however, was prepared for a reluctant welcome, and he had purposely sent his telegram at the last moment. Had he given an address, he suspected that he might have received a refusal of his visit. And his suspicion was accurate enough. The telegram, it is true, had merely announced Durrance's visit, it had stated nothing of his object; but its despatch was sufficient to warn Sutch that something grave had happened, something untoward in the relations of Ethne Eustace and Durrance. Durrance had come, no doubt, to renew his inquiries about Harry Feversham, those inquiries which Sutch was on no account to answer, which he must parry all this afternoon and night. But he saw Durrance feeling about with his raised foot for the step of the trap, and the fact of his visitor's blindness was brought home to him. He reached out a hand, and catching Durrance by the arm helped him up. After all, he thought, it would not be difficult to hoodwink a blind man. Ethne herself had had the same thought, and felt much the same relief as Sutch felt now. The Lieutenant, indeed, was so relieved that he found room for an impulse of pity.

'I was very sorry, Durrance, to hear of your bad luck,' he said as he drove off up the hill. 'I know what it is myself to be suddenly stopped and put aside just when one is making way and the world is smoothing itself out, though my wound in the leg is nothing in comparison to your blindness. I don't talk to you about compensations and patience. That's the gabble of people who are comfortable and haven't suffered. We know that for a man who is young and active, and who is doing well in a career where activity is a necessity, there are no compensations if his career's suddenly cut short through no fault of his.'

'Through no fault of his,' repeated Durrance. 'I agree with you. It is only the man whose career is cut short through his own fault who gets compensations.'

Sutch glanced sharply at his companion. Durrance had spoken slowly and very thoughtfully. Did he mean to refer to Harry Feversham, Sutch wondered. Did he know enough to be able so to refer to him? Or was it merely by chance that his words were so strikingly apposite?

'Compensations of what kind?' Sutch asked uneasily.

'The chance of knowing himself for one thing, for the chief thing. He is brought up short, stopped in his career, perhaps disgraced.' Sutch started a little at the word. 'Yes, perhaps—disgraced,' Durrance repeated. 'Well, the shock of the disgrace is, after all, his opportunity. Don't you see that? It's his opportunity to know himself at last. Up to the moment of disgrace his life has all been sham and illusion; the man he believed himself to be, he never was, and now at the last he knows it. Once he knows it, he can set about to retrieve his disgrace. Oh, there are compensations for such a man. You and I know a case in point.'

Sutch no longer doubted that Durrance was deliberately referring to Harry Feversham. He had some knowledge, though how he ever gained it Sutch could not guess. But the knowledge was not to Sutch's idea quite accurate, and the inaccuracy did Harry Feversham some injustice. It was on that account chiefly that Sutch did not affect any ignorance as to Durrance's allusion. The passage of the years had not diminished his great regard for Harry, he cared for him indeed with a woman's concentration of love, and he could not endure that his memory should be slighted.

'The case you and I know of is not quite in point,' he argued. 'You are speaking of Harry Feversham.'

'Who believed himself a coward, and was not one. He commits the fault which stops his career, he finds out his mistake, he sets himself to the work of retrieving his disgrace. Surely it's a case quite in point.'

'Yes, I see,' Sutch agreed. 'There is another view, a wrong view as I know, but I thought for the moment it was your view—that Harry fancied himself to be a brave man, and was suddenly brought up short by discovering that he was a coward. But how did you find out? No one knew the whole truth except myself.'

'I am engaged to Miss Eustace,' said Durrance.

'She did not know everything. She knew of the disgrace, but she did not know of the determination to retrieve it.'

'She knows now,' said Durrance; and he added sharply, 'You are glad of that—very glad.'

Sutch was not aware that by any movement or exclamation he had betrayed his pleasure. His face, no doubt, showed it clearly enough, but Durrance could not see his face. Lieutenant Sutch was puzzled, but he did not deny the imputation.

'It is true,' he said stoutly. 'I am very glad that she knows. I can quite see that from your point of view it would be better if she did not know. But I cannot help it. I am very glad.'

Durrance laughed, and not at all unpleasantly, 'I like you the better for being glad,' he said.

'But how does Miss Eustace know?' asked Sutch. 'Who told her? I did not, and there is no one else who could tell her.'

'You are wrong. There is Captain Willoughby. He came to Devonshire six weeks ago. He brought with him a white feather which he gave to Miss Eustace, as a proof that he withdrew his charge of cowardice against Harry Feversham.'

Sutch stopped the pony in the middle of the road. He no longer troubled to conceal the joy which this good news caused him. Indeed, he forgot altogether Durrance's presence at his side. He sat quite silent and still, with a glow of happiness upon him such as he had never known in all his life. He was an old man now, well on in his sixties; he had reached an age when the blood runs slow, and the pleasures are of a grey, sober kind, and joy has lost its fevers. But there welled up in his heart a gladness of such buoyancy as only falls to the lot of youth. Five years ago on the pier of Dover he had watched a mail packet steam away into darkness and rain, and had prayed that he might live until this great moment should come. And he had lived and it had come. His heart was lifted up in gratitude. It seemed to him that there was a great burst of sunlight across the world, and that the world itself had suddenly grown many-coloured and a place of joys. Ever since the night when he had stood outside the War Office in Pall Mall, and Harry Feversham had touched him on the arm and had spoken out his despair, Lieutenant Sutch had been oppressed with a sense of guilt. Harry was Muriel Feversham's boy, and Sutch just for that reason should have watched him and mothered him in his boyhood since his mother was dead, and fathered him in his youth since his father did not understand. But he had failed. He had failed in a sacred trust, and he imagined Muriel Feversham's eyes looking at

him with reproach from the barrier of the skies. He heard her voice in his dreams saying to him gently, ever so gently, 'Since I was dead, since I was taken away to where I could only see and not help, surely you might have helped. Just for my sake you might have helped, you whose work in the world was at an end.' And the long tale of his inactive years had stood up to accuse him. Now, however, the guilt was lifted from his shoulders, and by Harry Feversham's own act. The news was not altogether unexpected, but the lightness of spirit which he felt showed him how much he had counted upon its coming.

'I knew,' he exclaimed, 'I knew he wouldn't fail. Oh, I am glad you came to-day, Colonel Durrance. It was partly my fault, you see, that Harry Feversham ever incurred that charge of cowardice. I could have spoken—there was an opportunity on one of the Crimean nights at Broad Place, and a word might have been of value—and I held my tongue. I have never ceased to blame myself. I am grateful for your news. You have the particulars? Captain Willoughby was in peril, and Harry came to his aid?'

'No, it was not that exactly.'

'Tell me! Tell me!'

He feared to miss a word. Durrance related the story of the Gordon letters, and their recovery by Feversham. It was all too short for Lieutenant Sutch.

'Oh, but I am glad you came,' he cried.

'You understand at all events,' said Durrance, 'that I have not come to repeat to you the questions I asked in the courtyard of my club. I am able, on the contrary, to give you information.'

Sutch spoke to the pony and drove on. He had said nothing which could reveal to Durrance his fear that to renew those questions was the object of his visit; and he was a little perplexed at the accuracy of Durrance's conjecture. But the great news to which he had listened hindered him from giving thought to that perplexity.

'So Miss Eustace told you the story,' he said, 'and showed you the feather.'

'No, indeed,' replied Durrance. 'She said not a word about it, she never showed me the feather, she even forbade Willoughby to hint of it, she sent him away from Devonshire before I knew that he had come. You are disappointed at that,' he added quickly.

Lieutenant Sutch was startled. It was true he was disappointed, he was jealous of Durrance, he wished Harry Feversham to stand first in the girl's thoughts. It was for her sake that Harry had set about his difficult and perilous work. Sutch wished her to remember him as he remembered her. Therefore he was disappointed that she did not at once come with her news to Durrance and break off their engagement. It would be hard for Durrance, no doubt, but that could not be helped.

'Then how did you learn the story?' asked Sutch.

'Some one else told me. I was told that Willoughby had come, and that he had brought a white feather, and that Ethne had taken it from him. Never mind by whom. That gave me a clue. I lay in wait for Willoughby in London. He is not very clever; he tried to obey Ethne's command of silence, but I managed to extract the information I wanted. The rest of the story I was able to put together by myself. Ethne now and then was off her guard. You are surprised that I was clever enough to find out the truth by the exercise of my own wits?' said Durrance with a laugh.

Lieutenant Sutch jumped in his seat. It was mere chance, of course, that Durrance continually guessed with so singular an accuracy; still it was uncomfortable.

'I have said nothing which could in any way suggest that I was surprised,' he said testily.

'That is quite true, but you are none the less surprised,' continued Durrance. 'I don't blame you. You could not know that it is only since I have been blind that I have begun to see. Shall I give you an instance? This is the first time that I have ever come into this neighbourhood or got out at your station. Well, I can tell you that you have driven me up a hill between forests of pines, and are now driving me across open country of heather.'

Sutch turned quickly towards Durrance.

'The hill, of course, you would notice. But the pines?'

'The air was close. I knew there were trees. I guessed they were pines.'

'And the open country?'

'The wind blows clear across it. There's a dry stiff rustle besides. I have never heard quite that sound except when the wind blows across heather.'

He turned the conversation back to Harry Feversham and his disappearance, and the cause of his disappearance. He made no

mention, Sutch remarked, of the fourth white feather which Ethne herself had added to the three. But the history of the three which had come by the post to Ramelton he knew to its last letter.

'I was acquainted with the men who sent them,' he said, 'Trench, Castleton, Willoughby. I met them daily in Suakin, just ordinary officers, one rather shrewd, the second quite commonplace, the third distinctly stupid. I saw them going quietly about the routine of their work. It seems quite strange to me now. There should have been some mark set upon them, setting them apart as the particular messengers of fate. But there was nothing of the kind. They were just ordinary prosaic regimental officers. Doesn't it seem strange to you too? Here were men who could deal out misery and estrangement and years of suffering, without so much as a single word spoken, and they went about their business, and you never knew them from other men until a long while afterwards some consequence of what they did, and very likely have forgotten, rises up and strikes you down.'

'Yes,' said Sutch. 'That thought has occurred to me.' He fell to wondering again what object had brought Durrance into Hampshire, since he did not come for information; but Durrance did not immediately enlighten him. They reached the Lieutenant's house. It stood alone by the roadside looking across a wide country of downs. Sutch took Durrance over his stable and showed him his horses, he explained to him the arrangement of his garden and the grouping of his flowers. Still Durrance said nothing about the reason of his visit; he ceased to talk of Harry Feversham, and assumed a great interest in the Lieutenant's garden. But indeed the interest was not all pretence. These two men had something in common, as Sutch had pointed out at the moment of their meeting—the abrupt termination of a promising career. One of the two was old, the other comparatively young, and the younger man was most curious to discover how his elder had managed to live through the dragging profitless years alone. The same sort of lonely life lay stretched out before Durrance, and he was anxious to learn what alleviations could be practised, what small interests could be discovered, how best it could be got through.

'You don't live within sight of the sea,' he said at last, as they stood together, after making the round of the garden, at the door.

'No, I dare not,' said Sutch, and Durrance nodded his head in complete sympathy and comprehension.

'I understand. You care for it too much. You would have the full knowledge of your loss presented to your eyes each moment.'

They went into the house. Still Durrance did not refer to the object of his visit. They dined together and sat over their wine alone. Still Durrance did not speak. It fell to Lieutenant Sutch to recur to the subject of Harry Feversham. A thought had been gaining strength in his mind all that afternoon, and since Durrance would not lead up to its utterance, he spoke it out himself.

'Harry Feversham must come back to England. He has done enough to redeem his honour.'

Harry Feversham's return might be a little awkward for Durrance, and Lieutenant Sutch with that notion in his mind blurted out his sentences awkwardly, but to his surprise Durrance answered him at once.

'I was waiting for you to say that. I wanted you to realise without any suggestion of mine that Harry must return. It was with that object that I came.'

Lieutenant Sutch's relief was great. He had been prepared for an objection, at the best he only expected a reluctant acquiescence, and in the greatness of his relief he spoke again:

'His return will not really trouble you or your wife, since Miss Eustace has forgotten him.'

Durrance shook his head.

'She has not forgotten him.'

'But she kept silence even after Willoughby had brought the feather back. You told me so this afternoon. She said not a word to you. She forbade Willoughby to tell you.'

'She is very true, very loyal,' returned Durrance. 'She has pledged herself to me, and nothing in the world, no promise of happiness, no thought of Harry would induce her to break her pledge. I know her. But I know too that she only plighted herself to me out of pity, because I was blind. I know that she has not forgotten Harry.'

Lieutenant Sutch leaned back in his chair and smiled. He could have laughed outright. He asked for no details, he did not doubt Durrance's words. He was overwhelmed with pride in that Harry Feversham, in spite of his disgrace and his long absence—Harry Feversham, his favourite, had retained this girl's love. No

doubt she was very true, very loyal. Sutch endowed her on the instant with all the good qualities possible to a human being. The nobler she was, the greater was his pride that Harry Feversham still retained her heart. Lieutenant Sutch fairly revelled in this new knowledge. It was not to be wondered at after all, he thought, there was nothing astonishing in the girl's fidelity to anyone who was really acquainted with Harry Feversham, it was only an occasion of great gladness. Durrance would have to get out of the way, of course, but then he should never have crossed Harry Feversham's path. Sutch was cruel with the perfect cruelty of which love alone is capable.

'You are very glad of that,' said Durrance quietly. 'Very glad that Ethne has not forgotten him. It is a little hard on me, perhaps, who have not much left. It would have been less hard if two years ago you had told me the whole truth when I asked it of you that summer evening in the courtyard of the club.'

Compunction seized upon Lieutenant Sutch. The gentleness with which Durrance had spoken, and the quiet accent of weariness in his voice, brought home to him something of the cruelty of his great joy and pride. After all, what Durrance said was true. If he had broken his word that night at the club, if he had related Feversham's story, Durrance would have been spared a great deal.

'I couldn't!' he exclaimed. 'I promised Harry in the most solemn way that I would tell no one until he came back himself. I was sorely tempted to tell you, but I had given my word. Even if Harry never came back, if I obtained sure knowledge that he was dead, even then I was only to tell his father, and even his father not all that could be told on his behalf.'

He pushed back his chair and went to the window. 'It is hot in here,' he said. 'Do you mind?' and without waiting for an answer he loosed the catch and raised the sash. For some little while he stood by the open window, silent, undecided. Durrance plainly did not know of the fourth feather broken off from Ethne's fan, he had not heard the conversation between himself and Feversham in the grill-room of the Criterion Restaurant. There were certain words spoken by Harry upon that occasion which it seemed fair Durrance should now hear. Compunction and pity bade Sutch repeat them, his love of Harry Feversham enjoined him to hold his tongue. He could plead again that Harry had forbidden him speech, but the plea would be an excuse and nothing more. He knew very well that, were Harry present, Harry would

repeat them, and Lieutenant Sutch knew what harm silence had already done. He mastered his love in the end and came back to the table.

'There is something which it is fair you should know,' he said. 'When Harry went away to redeem his honour if the opportunity should come, he had no hope, indeed he had no wish, that Miss Eustace should wait for him. She was the spur to urge him, but she did not know even that. He did not wish her to know. He had no claim upon her. There was not even a hope in his mind that she might at some time be his friend—in this life at all events. When he went away from Ramelton, he parted, according to his thought, from her for all his mortal life. It is fair that you should know that. Miss Eustace, you tell me, is not the woman to withdraw from her pledged word. Well, what I said to you that evening at the club I now repeat. There will be no disloyalty to friendship if you marry Miss Eustace.'

It was a difficult speech for Lieutenant Sutch to utter, and he was very glad when he had uttered it. Whatever answer he received, it was right that the words should be spoken, and he knew that had he refrained from speech, he would always have suffered remorse for his silence. None the less, however, he waited in suspense for the answer.

'It is kind of you to tell me that,' said Durrance, and he smiled at the Lieutenant with a great friendliness. 'For I can guess what the words cost you. But you have done Harry Feversham no harm by speaking them. For, as I told you, Ethne has not forgotten him; and I have my point of view. Marriage between a man blind like myself and any woman, let alone Ethne, could not be fair or right unless upon both sides there was more than friendship. Harry must return to England. He must return to Ethne too. You must go to Egypt, and do what you can to bring him back.'

Sutch was relieved of his suspense. He had obeyed his conscience, and yet done Harry Feversham no disservice.

'I will start to-morrow,' he said. 'Harry is still in the Soudan?'

'Of course.'

'Why of course?' asked Sutch. 'Willoughby withdrew his accusation; Castleton is dead—he was killed at Tamai; and Trench—I know, for I have followed all these three men's careers—Trench is a prisoner in Omdurman.'

'So is Harry Feversham.'

Sutch stared at his visitor. For a moment he did not understand, the shock had been too sudden and abrupt. Then, after comprehension dawned upon him, he refused to believe. The folly of that refusal in its turn became apparent. He sat down in his chair opposite to Durrance, awed into silence. And the silence lasted for a long while.

'What am I to do?' he said at length.

'I have thought it out,' returned Durrance. 'You must go to Suakin. I will give you a letter to Willoughby, who is Deputy Governor, and another to a Greek merchant there whom I know, and on whom you can draw for as much money as you require.'

'That's good of you, Durrance, upon my word,' Sutch interrupted; and, forgetting that he was talking to a blind man, he held out his hand across the table. 'I would not take a penny if I could help it. But I am a poor man. Upon my soul, it's good of you.'

'Just listen to me, please,' said Durrance. He could not see the outstretched hand, but his voice showed that he would hardly have taken it if he had. 'At Suakin you must take the Greek merchant's advice and organise a rescue as best you can. It will be a long business, and you will have many disappointments before you succeed; but you must stick to it until you do.'

Upon that the two men fell to a discussion of the details of the length of time which it would take for a message from Suakin to be carried into Omdurman, of the untrustworthiness of some Arab spies, and of the risks which the trustworthy ran. Sutch's house was searched for maps; the various routes by which the prisoners might escape were described by Durrance—the great forty days' road from Kordofan on the west, the straight track from Omdurman to Berber and from Berber to Suakin, and the desert journey across the Belly of Stones by the wells of Murat to Korosko. It was late before Durrance had told all that he thought necessary and Sutch had exhausted his questions.

'You will stay at Suakin as your base of operations,' said Durrance as he closed up the maps.

'Yes,' answered Sutch; and he rose from his chair. 'I will start as soon as you give me the letters.'

'I have them already written.'

'Then I will start to-morrow. You may be sure I will let both you and Miss Eustace know how the attempt progresses.'

'Let me know,' said Durrance, 'but not a whisper of it to Ethne. She knows nothing of my plan, and she must know nothing until Feversham comes back himself. She has her point of view, as I have mine. Two lives shall not be spoilt because of her. That's her resolve. She believes that to some degree she was herself the cause of Harry Feversham's disgrace—that but for her he would not have resigned his commission.'

'Yes.'

'You agree with that? At all events, she believes it. So there's one life spoilt because of her. Suppose now I go to her and say, "I know that you pretend out of your charity and kindness to care for me, but in your heart you are no more than my friend," why, I hurt her, and cruelly. For there's all that's left of the second life spoilt too. But bring back Feversham! Then I can speak—then I can say freely, "Since you are just my friend, I would rather be your friend and nothing more. So neither life will be spoilt at all."'

'I understand,' said Sutch. 'It's the way a man should speak. So till Feversham comes back the pretence remains. She pretends to care for you, you pretend you do not know she thinks of Harry. While I go eastwards to bring him home, you go back to her.'

'No,' said Durrance, 'I can't go back. The strain of keeping up the pretence was telling too much on both of us. I go to Wiesbaden. An oculist lives there who serves me for an excuse. I shall wait at Wiesbaden until you bring Harry home.'

Sutch opened the door, and the two men went out into the hall. The servants had long since gone to bed. A couple of candlesticks stood upon a table beside a lamp. More than once Lieutenant Sutch had forgotten that his visitor was blind, and he forgot the fact again. He lighted both candles, and held out one to his companion. Durrance knew from the noise of Sutch's movements what he was doing.

'I have no need of a candle,' he said with a smile. The light fell full upon his face, and Sutch suddenly remarked how tired it looked and old. There were deep lines from the nostrils to the corners of the mouth, and furrows in the cheeks. His hair was grey as an old man's hair. Durrance had himself made so little of his misfortune this evening that Sutch had rather come to rate it as a small thing in the sum of human calamities; but he read his mistake now in Durrance's face. Just above the flame of the

candle, framed in the darkness of the hall, it showed white and drawn and haggard—the face of an old worn man set upon the stalwart shoulders of a man in the prime of his years.

‘I have said very little to you in the way of sympathy,’ said Sutch. ‘I did not know that you would welcome it. But I am sorry. I am very sorry.’

‘Thanks,’ said Durrance simply. He stood for a moment or two silently in front of his host. ‘When I was in the Soudan, travelling through the deserts, I used to pass the white skeletons of camels lying by the side of the track. Do you know the camel’s way? He is an unfriendly, graceless beast, but he marches to within an hour of his death. He drops and dies with the load upon his back. It seemed to me even in those days the right and enviable way to finish. You can imagine how I must envy them that advantage of theirs now. Good night.’

He felt for the banister, and walked up the stairs to his room.

CHAPTER XXVI.

GENERAL FEVERSHAM’S PORTRAITS ARE APPEASED.

LIEUTENANT SUTCH, though he went late to bed, was early astir in the morning. He roused the household, packed and repacked his clothes, and made such a bustle and confusion that everything to be done took twice its ordinary time in the doing. There never had been so much noise and flurry in the house during all the thirty years of Lieutenant Sutch’s residence. His servants could not satisfy him, however quickly they scuttled about the passages in search of this or that forgotten article of his old travelling outfit. Sutch, indeed, was in a boyish fever of excitement. It was not to be wondered at, perhaps. For thirty years he had lived inactive—on the world’s half-pay list, to quote his own phrase; and at the end of all that long time miraculously something had fallen to him to do—something important, something which needed energy and tact and decision. Lieutenant Sutch, in a word, was to be employed again. He was feverish to begin his employment. He dreaded the short interval before he could begin, lest some hindrance should unexpectedly occur and relegate him again to inactivity.

‘I shall be ready this afternoon,’ he said briskly to Durrance

as they breakfasted. 'I shall catch the night mail to the Continent. We might go up to London together; for London is on your way to Wiesbaden.'

'No,' said Durrance. 'I have just one more visit to pay in England. I did not think of it until I was in bed last night. You put it into my head.'

'Oh,' observed Sutch; 'and whom do you propose to visit?'

'General Feversham,' replied Durrance.

Sutch laid down his knife and fork, and looked with surprise at his companion. 'Why in the world do you wish to see him?' he asked.

'I want to tell him how Harry has redeemed his honour—how he is still redeeming it. You said last night that you were bound by a promise not to tell him anything of his son's intention, or even of his son's success, until the son returned himself. But I am bound by no promise. I think such a promise bears hardly on the General. There is nothing in the world which could pain him so much as the proof that his son was a coward. Harry might have robbed and murdered. The old man would have preferred him to have committed both these crimes. I shall cross into Surrey this morning and tell him that Harry never was a coward.'

Sutch shook his head.

'He will not be able to understand. He will be very grateful to you, of course. He will be very glad that Harry has atoned his disgrace, but he will never understand why he incurred it. And after all he will only be glad because the family honour is restored.'

'I don't agree,' said Durrance. 'I believe the old man is rather fond of his son, though, to be sure, he would never admit it.'

Lieutenant Sutch had seen very little of General Feversham during the last five years. He could not forgive him for his share in the responsibility of Harry Feversham's ruin. Had the General been capable of sympathy with and comprehension of the boy's nature, the white feathers would never have been sent to Ramelton. Sutch pictured the old man sitting sternly on his terrace at Broad Place, quite unaware that he was himself at all to blame, and, on the contrary, rather inclined to pose as a martyr in that his son had turned out a shame and disgrace to all the dead Fevershams whose portraits hung darkly on the high

walls of the hall. Sutch felt that he could never endure to talk patiently with General Feversham; and he was sure that no argument would turn that stubborn man from his convictions. He had not troubled at all to consider whether the news which Durrance had brought should be handed on to Broad Place.

‘You are very thoughtful for others,’ he said to Durrance.

‘It’s not to my credit. I practise thoughtfulness for others out of an instinct of self-preservation, that’s all,’ said Durrance. ‘Selfishness is the natural and encroaching fault of the blind. I know that, so I am careful to guard against it.’

He travelled accordingly that morning by branch lines from Hampshire into Surrey, and came to Broad Place in the glow of the afternoon. General Feversham was now within a few months of his eightieth year, and though his back was as stiff and his figure as erect as on that night, now so many years ago, when he first presented Harry to his Crimean friends, he was shrunken in stature, and his face seemed to have grown small. Durrance had walked with the General upon his terrace only two years ago, and, blind though he was, he noticed a change within this interval of time. Old Feversham walked with a heavier step, and there had come a note of puerility into his voice.

‘You have joined the veterans before your time, Durrance,’ he said. ‘I read of it in a newspaper. I would have written had I known where to write.’

If he had any suspicion of Durrance’s visit, he gave no sign of it. He rang the bell, and tea was brought into the great hall, where the portraits hung. He asked after this and that officer in the Soudan with whom he was acquainted; he discussed the iniquities of the War Office, and feared that the country was going to the deuce.

‘Everything, through ill-luck or bad management, is going to the devil, sir,’ he exclaimed irritably. ‘Even you, Durrance, you are not the same man who walked with me on my terrace two years ago.’

The General had never been remarkable for tact, and the solitary life he led had certainly brought no improvement. Durrance could have countered with a *tu quoque*, but he refrained.

‘But I come upon the same business,’ he said.

Feversham sat up stiffly in his chair.

'And I give you the same answer. I have nothing to say about Harry Feversham. I will not discuss him.'

He spoke in his usual hard and emotionless voice. He might have been speaking of a stranger. Even the name was uttered without the slightest hint of sorrow. Durrance began to wonder whether the fountains of affection had not been altogether dried up in General Feversham's heart.

'It would not please you, then, to know where Harry Feversham has been and how he has lived during the last five years?'

There was a pause—not a long pause, but still a pause—before General Feversham answered:

'Not in the least, Colonel Durrance.'

The answer was uncompromising, but Durrance relied upon the pause which preceded it.

'Nor on what business he has been engaged?' he continued.

'I am not interested in the smallest degree. I do not wish him to starve, and my solicitor tells me that he draws his allowance. I am content with that knowledge, Colonel Durrance.'

'I will risk your anger, General,' said Durrance. 'There are times when it is wise to disobey one's superior officer. This is one of the times. Of course, you can turn me out of the house. Otherwise I shall relate to you the history of your son and my friend since he disappeared from England.'

General Feversham laughed.

'Of course, I can't turn you out of the house,' he said; and he added severely, 'but I warn you that you are taking an improper advantage of your position as my guest.'

'Yes, there is no doubt of that,' Durrance answered calmly; and he told his story—the recovery of the Gordon letters from Berber, his own meeting with Harry Feversham at Wadi Halfa, and Harry's imprisonment at Omdurman. He brought it down to that very day, for he ended with the news of Lieutenant Sutch's departure for Suakin. General Feversham heard the whole account without an interruption, without even stirring in his chair. Durrance could not tell in what spirit he listened, but he drew some comfort from the fact that he did listen, and without argument.

For some while after Durrance had finished, the General sat silent. He raised his hand to his forehead and shaded his eyes,

as though the man who had spoken could see; and thus he remained. Even when he did speak, he did not take his hand away. Pride forbade him to show to those portraits on the walls that he was capable even of so natural a weakness as joy at the reconquest of honour by his son.

'What I don't understand,' he said slowly, 'is why Harry ever resigned his commission. I could not understand it before; I understand it even less now since you have told me of his great bravery. It is one of the queer inexplicable things. They happen, and there's all that can be said. But I am very glad that you compelled me to listen to you, Durrance.'

'I did it with a definite object. It is for you to say, of course, but for my part I do not see why Harry should not come home and enter in again to all that he lost.'

'He cannot regain everything,' said Feversham. 'It is not right that he should. He committed the sin, and he must pay. He cannot regain his career, for one thing.'

'No; that is true. But he can find another. He is not yet so old but that he can find another. And that is all that he will have lost.'

General Feversham now took his hand away and moved in his chair. He looked quickly at Durrance; he opened his mouth to ask a question, but changed his mind.

'Well,' he said briskly, and as though the matter were of no particular importance, 'if Sutch can manage Harry's escape from Omdurman, I see no reason either why he should not come home.'

Durrance rose from his chair. 'Thank you, General. If you can have me driven to the station I can catch a train to town. There's one at six.'

'But you will stay the night, surely,' cried General Feversham.

'It is impossible. I start for Wiesbaden early to-morrow.'

Feversham rang the bell and gave the order for a carriage. 'I should have been very glad if you could have stayed,' he said, turning to Durrance. 'I see very few people nowadays. To tell the truth, I have no great desire to see many. One grows old and a creature of customs.'

'But you have your Crimean nights,' said Durrance cheerfully.

Feversham shook his head. 'There have been none since Harry went away. I had no heart for them,' he said slowly.

For a second the mask was lifted and his stern features softened. He had suffered much during these five lonely years of his old age, though not one of his acquaintances up to this moment had ever detected a look upon his face or heard a sentence from his lips which could lead them so to think. He had shown a stubborn front to the world. He had made it a matter of pride that no one should be able to point a finger at him and say, 'There's a man struck down.' But on this one occasion and in these few words he revealed to Durrance the depth of his grief. Durrance understood how unendurable the chatter of his friends about the old days of war in the snowy trenches would have been. An anecdote recalling some particular act of courage would hurt as keenly as a story of cowardice. The whole history of his lonely life at Broad Place was laid bare in that simple statement that there had been no Crimean nights, for he had no heart for them.

The wheels of the carriage rattled on the gravel.

'Good-bye,' said Durrance; and he held out his hand.

'By the way,' said Feversham, 'to organise this escape from Omdurman will cost a great deal of money. Sutch is a poor man. Who is paying?'

'I am.'

Feversham shook Durrance's hand in a firm clasp. 'It is my right, of course,' he said.

'Certainly. I will let you know what it costs.'

'Thank you.'

General Feversham accompanied his visitor to the door. There was a question which he had it in his mind to ask, but the question was delicate. He stood uneasily on the steps of the house.

'Didn't I hear, Durrance,' he said, with an air of carelessness, 'that you were engaged to Miss Eustace?'

'I think I said that Harry would regain all that he had lost except his career,' said Durrance.

He stepped into the carriage and drove off to the station. His work was ended. There was nothing more for him now to do, except to wait at Wiesbaden and pray that Sutch might succeed. He had devised the plan; it remained for those who had eyes wherewith to see to execute it.

General Feversham stood upon the steps looking after the carriage until it disappeared among the pines. Then he walked slowly back into the hall. 'There is no reason why he should

not come back,' he said. He looked up at the pictures. The dead Fevershams in their uniforms would not be disgraced. 'No reason in the world,' he said. 'And please God he will come back soon.' The dangers of an escape from the Dervish city remote among the sands began to loom very large on his mind. He owned to himself that he felt very tired and old, and many times that night he repeated his prayer, 'Please God, Harry will come back soon,' as he sat erect upon the bench which had once been his wife's favourite seat, and gazed out across the moonlit country to the Sussex downs.

(To be continued.)

